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V. I. LENIN

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY
(1900-1904)

V·I·L E N I N

SELECTED WORKS

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

Translated from the Russian as issued by
THE MARX-ENGELS-LENIN INSTITUTE
Moscow, U. S. S. R.

V·I·LENIN

SELECTED WORKS

VOLUME II

**THE STRUGGLE FOR THE
BOLSHEVIK PARTY
(1900-04)**



INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS

381 FOURTH AVENUE

NEW YORK

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First Published by
CO-OPERATIVE PUBLISHING SOCIETY OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN THE U.S.S.R.

PRINTED IN THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

263

A3

L4

S927

1935

Edited by
J. FINEBERG

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PREFACE

VOLUME II of the *Selected Works* of Lenin covers the period from 1900 to 1904 inclusive. During these five years Lenin wrote some of his most important works, in which he formulated the programme, the tactics and the organisational principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy.

The initial period of the history of Russian Social-Democracy ended at about the turn of the century. Lenin divided this period into the following subdivisions: 1) approximately from 1884 to 1894, the period of "the rise and consolidation of the theory and programme of Social-Democracy"; 2) the period from 1894 to 1898, in which Social-Democracy appears "as a social movement, as a rising of the masses of the people and as a political party," and 3) the period from 1897 to 1898, which was a period of "dispersion, dissolution and vacillation" in the ranks of Social-Democracy, and the period of the determined struggle against this "dispersion and dissolution" that was waged by the revolutionary Marxists. The fight culminated in the rise and growth of the *Iskra*-ist trend in Russian Social-Democracy which ushered in the *Iskra* period in the history of the Party. It was in this period that Bolshevism took shape. At the Second Congress of the Party it was already, to use Lenin's words, "a school of political thought, a political party."

The Second Congress of the Party and the period following it was marked by the struggle between the majority and the minority which was in fact the struggle between the two tendencies in Russian Social-Democracy, namely, the proletarian revolutionary tendency and the petty-bourgeois reformist tendency.

The contents of the present volume are grouped in two sections; the first covers the *Iskra* period, and the second, the

period of the Party Congress and the struggle between the majority and the minority.

The former period begins with the rise and growth of *Iskra* and the work of the *Iskra*-ists in Russia. *Iskra* was founded in 1900, the end of what Lenin classified as the third transitional period (see Volume I), a period particularly marked by "dispersion" and "vacillation." Together with *Zarya*, *Iskra* from the very outset took the high road of political struggle for revolutionary Marxism, for the Party. Lenin comes forward as the leader of the orthodox (subsequently the Bolshevik) wing of the Party, and the ideas of Leninism become the banner round which all the revolutionary elements in the Social-Democratic movement rally in the fight.

The writings of this period include *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), a work of genius and of the greatest importance. It condenses all the *Iskra*-ist ideas, and presents a number of generalisations of the revolutionary experience of Social-Democratic work, an experience which was to acquire the greatest significance not only for the development of Bolshevism in Russia, but for the Communist Parties abroad as well. In championing the idea of a monolithic, centralised party armed with a revolutionary theory, Lenin concentrates his attack on Economism, the main opportunist trend in Russian Social-Democracy at that time. He puts forward the slogan of organising a centralised nucleus of professional revolutionaries as the necessary condition for the abandonment of primitive methods and *khvostism*, i.e., dragging at the tail of the movement instead of leading it, and for raising the Party's work to a higher level. *What Is To Be Done?* develops and carries further the fight for the Party which *Iskra* started from the outset. Lenin describes it as an "epitome of *Iskra*-ist tactics, and of *Iskra*'s organisational policy in 1901-02."

Besides a number of articles written by Lenin in these years which appeared in *Iskra*, the present volume contains works that appeared in *Zarya*, the theoretical organ of revolutionary Social-Democracy, viz., *The Persecutors of the Zemstvo and the Hannibals of Liberalism* (1901), *The Agrarian Programme of*

Russian Social-Democracy (1902) and the popular pamphlet *To the Rural Poor* (1902), which expounded and gave the grounds for the agrarian programme of the Party in connection with its general programme and which was extremely important in popularising the programme of the Party among the masses of the workers.

Part II of this volume covers the period of the Second Congress and of the split in the R.S.D.L.P. The exceptional importance of this period in the history of the Party is a matter of common knowledge. It was then that the subsequent development of the revolutionary and the reformist wings of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia was determined and Bolshevism took shape. It was precisely in this period that the line of Lenin and the Bolsheviks for a "rupture, for a split with opportunism, here, in the Russian Social-Democratic Party, and over there, in the Second International" (Stalin), became quite clearly defined, a line, which, starting with the formation of the Bolshevik Party, led to the final organisational rupture with the opportunists in Russia at the Prague Conference in 1912, to the final rupture with the Second International at the beginning of the war, and the formation of the Third, Communist International in 1919. In the course of the fierce fight against opportunism in its new form of Menshevism, and of the "conciliationism" which appeared at the end of 1903 and the beginning of 1904, Lenin wrote a number of articles and pamphlets including: *An Account of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.*, *Report on the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. to the Second Congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad* (1903); *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* (1904); *The Zemstvo Campaign and "Iskra's" Plan* (1904).

Lenin's fight against the organisational opportunism of the Mensheviks developed into a fight against their opportunism in tactical questions, which became apparent on the eve of the Revolution of 1905. Thus, the period after the Second Congress forms, as it were, a transition period to the fight for revolutionary Bolshevik tactics in that revolution, for armed insurrection

and for the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

In summing up his writings for the first twelve years of his literary activity, in the Preface to the symposium *Twelve Years*, that is to say, for a period which roughly corresponds to the one covered by Volumes I and II of *Selected Works*, and speaking of the stubborn fight against the opportunist Right wing of the Russian Social-Democratic movement which the Party had to wage (and which was primarily the work of Lenin himself), Lenin says:

“When we look back at the struggle between the two tendencies in Russian Marxism and in Russian Social-Democracy during these twelve years (1895-1907) the conclusion forces itself upon us that ‘legal Marxism,’ ‘Economism,’ and ‘Menshevism’ are different manifestations of the same historical tendency. The ‘legal Marxism’ of Struve (1894), and the like, was the *reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature*. ‘Economism,’ as a distinct tendency in the Social-Democratic movement in 1897 and the following years, in reality put into practice the programme of the *bourgeois liberal ‘Credo’*¹: economic struggle for the workers—political struggle for the liberals. Menshevism is not merely a tendency in literature, not merely a tendency in Social-Democratic work; it is an organised faction, which, during the first period of the Russian revolution (1905-07), pursued a distinct policy *which virtually subordinated the proletariat to bourgeois liberalism.*”

The present volume covers the period that is covered by Volumes II and III of the *Collected Works* of Lenin.

It is obvious that a considerable part of his writings of this period had to be omitted. This includes a number of articles on subjects that are treated in works contained in the present volume, a considerable number of articles published in *Iskra*, and of letters and notes referring to the period of the split after the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.

In the main the material is grouped in chronological order, but in certain cases articles dealing with kindred subjects have

¹ See *Selected Works*, Volume I, pp. 516-27.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

been grouped together irrespective of the date on which they were written in order to facilitate the study of these subjects.

Readers are urged to make full use of the explanatory notes in the appendix. These are indicated by an asterisk (*) in the text, and the note in question can be found under the number in the explanatory notes corresponding to the number of the page on which it occurs. Where more than one note occurs on a page, subsequent notes are indicated by two or more asterisks as the case may be. Footnotes are designated by superior figures (¹).

PART I

THE FIGHT FOR THE VANGUARD PARTY. TACTICS, ORGANISATION AND PROGRAMME

DECLARATION BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF *ISKRA*

IN undertaking the publication of a political newspaper, *Iskra*,* we consider it necessary to say a few words about our aims and what we understand our tasks to be.

We are passing through an extremely important period in the history of the Russian labour movement and of Russian Social-Democracy. The past few years have been marked by an astonishingly rapid spread of Social-Democratic ideas among our intelligentsia, and coming forward to meet this tendency of social ideas is the movement of the industrial proletariat, which arose independently, and which is beginning to unite and to fight against its oppressors, is beginning eagerly to strive towards socialism. Circles of workers and Social-Democratic intelligentsia are springing up everywhere; local agitation leaflets are beginning to be distributed, the demand for Social-Democratic literature is increasing and is far outstripping the supply, while the intensified persecution by the government is powerless to restrain this movement. The prisons and the places of exile are filled to overflowing. Hardly a month goes by without our hearing of Socialists being "discovered" in all parts of Russia, of the capture of literature-carriers, and the confiscation of literature and printing presses—but the movement goes on and grows, spreads to a wider area, penetrates more and more deeply into the working class, and attracts increasing public attention to itself. The entire economic development of Russia, the history of the development of social ideas in Russia and of the Russian revolutionary movement serve as a guarantee that the Russian Social-Democratic labour movement will grow and ultimately surmount all the obstacles that confront it.

On the other hand, the principal feature of our movement, and one which has become particularly marked in recent times, is its state of disunity and its primitive character—if one may

so express it. Local circles spring up and function independently of one another and (what is particularly important) even of circles which have functioned and now function simultaneously in the same district. Traditions are not established and continuity is not maintained; the local literature entirely reflects this disunity and lack of contact with what Russian Social-Democracy has already created.

This state of disunity runs counter to the requirements called forth by the strength and breadth of the movement, and this, in our opinion, marks a critical moment in its history. In the movement itself the need is strongly felt for consolidation and for definite form and organisation; and yet many active Social-Democrats still fail to realise the need for the movement passing to a higher form. On the contrary, among wide circles an ideological wavering is observed, an absorption in the fashionable "criticism of Marxism" and "Bernsteinism," in spreading the views of the so-called "Economist" tendency and, what is inseparably connected with it, the effort to keep the movement at its lowest stage, an effort to push into the background the task of forming a revolutionary party to lead the struggle at the head of the whole people. *It is a fact* that such an ideological wavering is observed among Russian Social-Democrats, that narrow practical work carried on without a theoretical conception of the movement as a whole threatens to divert the movement to a false path. No one who has direct knowledge of the state of affairs in the majority of our organisations has any doubt whatever on that score. Moreover, literary productions exist which confirm this. It is sufficient to mention the *Credo* which has already evoked legitimate protest, the Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl* (September 1899),* which brought out in such bold relief the tendency with which *Rabochaya Mysl* is thoroughly imbued, and, finally, the Manifesto of the St. Petersburg Self-Emancipation of the Working Class group,** drawn up in the spirit of this very Economism. The assertions made by *Rabocheye Dyelo* to the effect that the *Credo* merely represents the opinions of individuals, that the tendency represented by *Rabochaya Mysl* reflects merely the con-

fusion of mind and the tactlessness of its editors, and not a special tendency in the progress of the Russian labour movement, *are absolutely untrue*.*

Simultaneously with this, the works of authors whom the reading public has with more or less reason regarded up to now as the prominent representatives of "legal Marxism" more and more reveal a turn towards views approaching those of bourgeois apologists. As a result of all this, we have the confusion and anarchy which enabled the ex-Marxist, or, to speak more correctly, the ex-Socialist, Bernstein, in recounting his successes, to declare unchallenged in the press that the majority of Social-Democrats active in Russia were his followers.

We do not desire to exaggerate the danger of the situation, but it would be immeasurably more harmful to shut our eyes to it. That is why we welcome with all our heart the decision of the Emancipation of Labour group to resume its literary activity and commence a systematic struggle against the attempts to distort and vulgarise Social-Democracy.

The practical conclusion to be drawn from all this is as follows: we Russian Social-Democrats must combine and direct all our efforts towards the formation of a strong party that will fight under the united banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy. This is precisely the task that was outlined by the Congress in 1898, at which the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party was formed, and which published its Manifesto.

We regard ourselves as members of this Party; we entirely agree with the fundamental ideas contained in the Manifesto, and attach extreme importance to it as a public declaration of its aims. Consequently, for us, as members of the Party, the question as to what our immediate and direct tasks are presents itself as follows: what plan of activity must we adopt in order to revive the Party on the firmest possible basis?

The reply usually given to this question is that it is necessary to elect a central Party institution once more and to instruct that body to resume the publication of the Party organ. But in the confused period through which we are now passing such a simple method is hardly expedient.

To establish and consolidate the Party means establishing and consolidating unity among all Russian Social-Democrats, and, for the reasons indicated above, such unity cannot be brought about by decree; it cannot be brought about by, let us say, a meeting of representatives passing a resolution. Definite work must be done to bring it about. In the first place, it is necessary to bring about unity of ideas which will remove the differences of opinion and confusion that—we will be frank—reign among Russian Social-Democrats at the present time. This unity of ideas must be fortified by a unified Party programme. Secondly, an organisation must be set up especially for the purpose of maintaining contact among all the centres of the movement, for supplying complete and timely information about the movement, and for regularly distributing the periodical press to all parts of Russia. Only when we have built such an organisation, only when we have created a Russian socialist mailing system, will the permanent existence of the Party be assured, only then will it become a real factor and, consequently, a mighty political force. To the first half of this task, *i.e.*, creating a common literature, consistent in principle and capable of ideologically uniting revolutionary Social-Democracy, we intend to devote our efforts, for we regard this as one of the pressing tasks of the present-day movement and a necessary preliminary measure towards the resumption of Party activity.

As we have already said, the intellectual unity of Russian Social-Democrats has still to be established, and in order to achieve this it is necessary, in our opinion, to have an open and thorough discussion of the fundamental principles and tactical questions raised by the present-day Economists, Bernsteinists and "critics." Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all firmly and definitely draw the lines of demarcation. Otherwise, our unity will be merely a fictitious unity, which will conceal the prevailing confusion and prevent its complete elimination. Naturally, therefore, we do not intend to utilise our publication merely as a storehouse for various views. On the contrary, we shall conduct it along the lines of

a strictly defined tendency. This tendency can be expressed by the word Marxism, and there is hardly need to add that we stand for the consistent development of the ideas of Marx and Engels, and utterly reject the half-way, vague and opportunistic emendations which have now become so fashionable as a result of the *légerdemain* of Ed. Bernstein, P. Struve and many others. But while discussing all questions from our own definite point of view, we shall not rule out of our columns polemics between comrades. Open polemics within the sight and hearing of all Russian Social-Democrats and class conscious workers are necessary and desirable, in order to explain the profound differences that exist, to obtain a comprehensive discussion of disputed questions, and to combat the extremes into which the representatives, not only of various views, but also of various localities or various "crafts" in the revolutionary movement inevitably fall. As has already been stated, we also consider one of the drawbacks of the present-day movement to be the absence of open polemics among those holding avowedly differing views, an effort to conceal the differences that exist over extremely serious questions.

We shall not enumerate in detail all the questions and themes included in the programme of our publication, for this programme automatically emerges from the general conception of what a political newspaper, published under present conditions, should be.

We shall exert every effort to persuade every Russian comrade to regard our publication as his own, as one to which every group should communicate information concerning the movement, in which to relate its experiences, express its views, its literature requirements, its opinions on Social-Democratic publications, in fact to make it the medium through which it can share with the other groups the contribution it makes to the movement and what it receives from it. Only in this way will it be possible to establish a genuinely all-Russian organ of Social-Democracy. Only such an organ will be capable of leading the movement onto the high road of the political struggle. "Push out the framework and broaden the content of our propaganda, agitational and organisational activity"—these words

uttered by P. B. Axelrod must serve as our slogan defining the activities of Russian Social-Democrats in the immediate future, and we adopt this slogan in the programme of our organ.

We appeal not only to Socialists and class conscious workers; we also call upon all those who are oppressed by the present political system. We place the columns of our publication at their disposal in order that they may expose all the abominations of the Russian autocracy.

Those who regard Social-Democracy as an organisation serving exclusively the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat may remain satisfied with merely local agitation and "pure and simple" labour literature. We do not regard Social-Democracy in this way; we regard it as a revolutionary party, inseparably linked up with the labour movement and directed against absolutism. Only when organised in such a party will the proletariat—the most revolutionary class in modern Russia—be in a position to fulfil the historical task that confronts it, namely, to unite under its banner all the democratic elements in the country and to crown the stubborn fight waged by a number of generations that have perished in the past with the final triumph over the hated regime.

* * *

The size of the newspaper will range from one to two printed signatures.¹ In view of the conditions under which the Russian underground press has to work, there will be no regular date of publication.

We have been promised contributions by a number of prominent representatives of international Social-Democracy, the close co-operation of the Emancipation of Labour group (G. V. Plekhanov, P. B. Axelrod and V. I. Zasulich), the support of several organisations of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and also of separate groups of Russian Social-Democrats.

September 1900.

¹ In referring to printed matter (books, pamphlets, magazines, etc.), Russians always calculate on the basis of sixteen-page signatures, not the number of words.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

THE URGENT TASKS OF OUR MOVEMENT¹

RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY has more than once declared that the immediate political tasks of a Russian labour party should be to overthrow the autocracy and to secure political liberty. This was declared more than fifteen years ago by the representatives of Russian Social-Democracy—the members of the Emancipation of Labour group. It was declared two and a half years ago by the representatives of the Russian Social-Democratic organisations, which in the spring of 1898 founded the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. In spite of repeated declarations, however, the question of the political tasks of Social-Democracy in Russia is now again coming to the fore. Many representatives of our movement express doubt as to the efficacy of the above-mentioned solution of the problem. It is claimed that the economic struggle is of predominant importance; the political tasks of the proletariat are placed in the background, narrowed down and restricted. It is even stated that the talk about forming an independent labour party in Russia is merely an imitation of others, that the workers ought to conduct only the economic struggle and leave politics to the intelligentsia in alliance with the liberals. The latest confession of faith (the notorious *Credo*), recently published, amounts practically to a declaration that the Russian proletariat is still a minor, and to a complete rejection of the Social-Democratic programme. *Rabochaya Mysl* (more particularly in its Special Supplement) takes practically the same attitude. Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a period of vacillation and doubt which amounts to self-negation. On the one hand, the labour movement is being torn away from socialism,

¹ The leading article in *Iskra*, No. 1, in which Lenin in the name of the editors outlines the tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy.—Ed.

the workers are being helped to carry on the economic struggle, but nothing is done to explain to them the socialist aims and the political tasks of the movement as a whole. On the other hand, socialism is being torn away from the labour movement; once again Russian Socialists are beginning to talk more and more about the fight against the government having to be carried on entirely by the intelligentsia, because the workers are confining themselves only to the economic struggle.

In our opinion, three circumstances have prepared the ground for this sad state of affairs. First, in the beginning of their activity, Russian Social-Democrats restricted themselves merely to work in propaganda circles. When we took up the work of agitation among the masses we were not always able to restrain ourselves from going to the other extreme. Secondly, in the beginning of our activity we often had to fight for our right of existence against the Narodovolists,¹ who by "politics" understood activity isolated from the labour movement and who reduced politics exclusively to struggle by means of conspiracies. In rejecting this sort of politics, the Social-Democrats went to the extreme of pushing politics entirely into the background. Thirdly, in working isolatedly, in small, local workers' circles, the Social-Democrats did not devote sufficient attention to organising a revolutionary party which would combine all the activities of the local groups and make it possible to organise the revolutionary work on proper lines. The predominance of isolated work is naturally connected with the predominance of the economic struggle.

The above-mentioned circumstances caused all attention to be concentrated upon one side of the movement only. The "Economist" tendency (that is, if we can speak of it as a "tendency") has attempted to elevate this one-sidedness to a theory, and has tried to utilise for this purpose the now fashionable Bernsteinism, and fashionable "criticism of Marxism," which is introducing old bourgeois ideas under a new flag. These attempts alone have given rise to the danger of the weakening of the connection

¹ People's Will Party, early Russian Socialists who fought against tsarism by means of terrorism.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

between the Russian labour movement and Russian Social-Democracy, which is the vanguard in the struggle for political liberty. The most urgent task of our movement is to strengthen this connection.

Social-Democracy is a combination of the labour movement with socialism. Its task is not passively to serve the labour movement at each of its separate stages, but to represent the interests of the movement as a whole, to point out to this movement its ultimate aims and its political tasks, and to protect its political and ideological independence. Isolated from Social-Democracy, the labour movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois: in conducting only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence; it becomes the tail of other parties and runs counter to the great slogan: "The emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves." In every country there has been a period in which the labour movement existed separately from the socialist movement, each going its own road; and in every country this state of isolation weakened both the socialist movement and the labour movement. Only the combination of socialism with the labour movement in each country created a durable basis for both the one and the other. But in each country this combination of socialism with the labour movement took place historically, was brought about in a special way, in accordance with the conditions prevailing at the time in each country. In Russia, the necessity for combining socialism with the labour movement was proclaimed in theory long ago but it is only now being put into practice. The process of combining the two movements is an extremely difficult one, and there is therefore nothing surprising in the fact that it is accompanied by vacillations and doubts.

What lesson should we learn from the past?

The whole history of Russian socialism has so brought it about that the most urgent task of the day is to fight against the autocratic government to win political liberty. Our socialist movement has concentrated, so to speak, on the struggle against the autocracy. On the other hand, history has shown

that the isolation of socialist thought from the advanced representatives of the working classes is greater in Russia than in other countries, and that as long as this isolation continues the revolutionary movement in Russia is doomed to impotence. From this automatically emerges the task which Russian Social-Democracy is destined to fulfil: to imbue the masses of the proletariat with the ideas of socialism and with political consciousness, and to organise a revolutionary party closely connected with the spontaneous labour movement. Russian Social-Democracy has already done much in this direction, but much more still remains to be done. With the growth of the movement, the field of activity for Social-Democrats is becoming much wider; the work is becoming more varied, an increasing number of Party workers are concentrating their efforts upon the fulfilment of various special tasks which the daily needs of propaganda and agitation bring to the fore. This circumstance is absolutely legitimate and inevitable, but efforts must be exerted to prevent these special activities and special methods in the struggle from becoming ends in themselves and to prevent preparatory work from being raised to the level of the main and sole work.

To assist the political development and the political organisation of the working class is our principal and fundamental task. Those who push this task into the background, who refuse to subordinate to it all the special tasks and methods of the struggle, are straying onto the wrong path and are causing serious harm to the movement. And this task is pushed into the background, first, by those who call revolutionaries to the struggle against the government through the medium of circles of conspirators isolated from the labour movement and, secondly, by those who restrict the content and scope of political propaganda, agitation and organisation, who think the workers ought to be treated to politics only in exceptional moments of their lives, only on festive occasions, those who so sedulously substitute for the political struggle against the autocracy demands for partial concessions from the autocracy, and are little concerned with raising the demand for separate concessions into a systematic and determined struggle of the revolutionary party against the autocracy.

“Organise!” is the appeal *Rabochaya Mysl* repeats to the workers in a thousand different sharps and flats, and this appeal is taken up by all the adherents of the Economist tendency. We, of course, wholly endorse this appeal but we unconditionally add to it: organise, not only in benefit societies, strike funds and workers’ circles, but organise also in a political party, organise for the determined struggle against the autocratic government, and against the whole of capitalist society. Unless the proletariat organises in this way, it will never rise to the heights of class conscious struggle; unless the workers organise in this way, the labour movement is doomed to impotence. Merely with the aid of funds and circles and benefit societies, the working class will never be able to fulfil its great historic mission: to emancipate itself and the whole of the Russian people from political and economic slavery. Not a single class in history has achieved power without producing its political leaders, its prominent representatives able to organise a movement and lead it. And the Russian working class has already shown that it can produce such men: the struggle which has developed so widely during the past five or six years has revealed the great potential revolutionary power of the working class; it has shown that the most ruthless government persecution does not diminish but, on the contrary, increases the number of workers who strive towards socialism, towards political consciousness and towards the political struggle. The congress which our comrades held in 1898 quite correctly defined our tasks and did not merely repeat other people’s words, did not merely express the “enthusiasm” of the “intelligentsia.” We must set to work resolutely to fulfil these tasks, we must raise the question of defining the programme, organisation and tactics of the Party. We have already explained our views on the fundamental postulates of our programme and, of course, this is not the place to develop them in detail. We propose to devote a series of articles in ensuing numbers to questions of organisation. This is one of the sorest questions confronting us. In this respect, we lag considerably behind the old workers in the Russian revolutionary movement. We must frankly admit this de-

fect, and exert all our efforts to devise methods of greater secrecy in our work, to conduct systematic propaganda explaining the proper methods of conducting the work, proper methods of deceiving the gendarmes and of avoiding the snares of the police. We must train people who will devote to the revolution not only their spare evenings, but the whole of their lives; we must build up an organisation large enough to be able to introduce strict division of labour in the various forms of our work. Finally, with regard to the question of tactics, we intend to confine ourselves here to the following: Social-Democracy does not tie its hands, it does not restrict its activities to some preconceived plan or method of political struggle; it recognises all methods of struggle, as long as they correspond to the forces at the disposal of the Party and facilitate the achievement of the greatest results possible under the given conditions.

If we have a strongly organised party, a single strike may grow into a political demonstration, into a political victory over the government. If we have a strongly organised party, a rebellion in a single locality may flare up into a victorious revolution. We must bear in mind that the fight against the government for certain demands, the gain of certain concessions, are merely slight skirmishes with the enemy, slight skirmishes of outposts, but that the decisive battle still lies ahead.

Before us, in all its strength, towers the fortress of the enemy from which a hail of shells and bullets pours down upon us, mowing down our best warriors. We must capture this fortress, and we shall capture it if we combine all the forces of the awakening proletariat with all the forces of the Russian revolutionaries into a single party that will attract all that is virile and honest in Russia. Only then will be fulfilled the prophecy of the great Russian worker-revolutionary, Peter Alexeyev: "The muscular arms of millions of workers will be raised, and the yoke of despotism, that is guarded by soldiers' bayonets, will be smashed to atoms!"

December 1900.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

THE question "what is to be done?" has been very prominent before the Russian Social-Democrats in the past few years. It is not a matter of choosing the path we are to travel (as was the case at the end of the 'eighties and the beginning of the 'nineties), but of the practical measures and the methods we must adopt on a certain path. What we have in mind is a system and plan of practical activity. It must be confessed that the question of the character of the struggle and the means by which it is to be carried on—which is a fundamental question for a practical party—still remains unsettled and still gives rise to serious differences which reveal a deplorable uncertainty and ideological wavering. On the one hand, the "Economist" tendency, which strives to curtail and restrict the work of political organisation and agitation, is not dead yet by any means. On the other hand, the tendency of unprincipled eclecticism, masquerading in the guise of every new "idea" and incapable of distinguishing between the requirements of the moment and the permanent needs of the movement as a whole, still proudly raises its head. As is well known, such a tendency has entrenched itself in *Rabocheye Dyelo*. The latest statement of "principles" published by that paper—a sensational article bearing the bombastic title, "A Historical Turn"* (*Listok Rabochevo Dyela*, No. 6)—strongly confirms our opinion of it. Only yesterday, we flirted with Economism, expressed our indignation at the severe condemnation of *Rabochaya Mysl*, and "modified" the Plekhanov presentation of the question of fighting against the autocracy; but today we quote the words of Liebknecht: "If circumstances change within twenty-four hours then tactics must be changed within twenty-four hours"; now we talk about a "strong fighting organisation" for the direct attack upon

and storming of the autocracy; about "extensive revolutionary, political [how strongly this is worded: revolutionary and political!] agitation among the masses"; about "unceasing calls for street protests"; about "organising street demonstrations of a sharply [*sic!*] expressed political character," etc., etc.

We might have expressed satisfaction at *Rabocheye Dyelo* having so readily understood the programme we advocated in the very first number of *Iskra*, viz., establishing a strongly organised party for the purpose of winning, not only a few concessions, but the very fortress of the autocracy; but the absence of anything like a fixed point of view in *Rabocheye Dyelo* spoils all our pleasure.

Rabocheye Dyelo takes Liebknecht's name in vain, of course. Tactics in carrying on agitation on some special question, or in relation to some detail of Party organisation, may be changed within twenty-four hours; but views as to whether a militant organisation and political agitation among the masses are necessary, necessary at all times and absolutely necessary, cannot be changed in twenty-four hours, or even in twenty-four months for that matter—except by those who have no fixed ideas on anything. It is absurd to refer to changed circumstances and changing periods. Work for the establishment of a fighting organisation and for carrying on political agitation must be carried on under all circumstances, no matter how "drab and peaceful" the times may be, and no matter how low the "depression of revolutionary spirit" has sunk. More than that, it is precisely in such conditions and in such periods that this work is particularly required; for it would be too late to start building such an organisation in the midst of uprisings and outbreaks. The organisation must be ready to develop its activity at any moment. "Change tactics in twenty-four hours!" In order to change tactics it is necessary first of all to have tactics, and without a strong organisation, tested in the political struggle carried on under all circumstances and in all periods, there can be no talk of a systematic plan of activity, enlightened by firm principles and unswervingly carried out, which alone is worthy of being called tactics. Think of it! We are now told

that the "historical moment" has confronted our Party with the "absolutely new" question of—terror!* Yesterday the "absolutely new" question was the question of political organisation and agitation; today it is the question of terror! Does it not sound strange to hear people with such short memories arguing about radical changes in tactics?

Fortunately, *Rabocheye Dyelo* is wrong. The question of terror is certainly not a new one, and it will be sufficient briefly to recall the long-established views of Russian Social-Democracy on this question to prove it.

We have never rejected terror on principle, nor can we do so. Terror is a form of military operation that may be usefully applied, or may even be essential in certain moments of the battle, under certain conditions, and when the troops are in a certain condition. The point is, however, that terror is now advocated, not as one of the operations the army in the field must carry out in close connection and in complete harmony with the whole system of fighting, but as an individual attack, completely separated from any army whatever. In view of the absence of a central revolutionary organisation, terror cannot be anything but that. That is why we declare that under present circumstances such a method of fighting is inopportune and inexpedient; it will distract the most active fighters from their present tasks, which are more important from the standpoint of the interests of the whole movement, and will disrupt, not the government forces, but the revolutionary forces. Recall recent events.** Before our very eyes, broad masses of the urban workers and the urban "common people" rushed into battle, but the revolutionaries lacked a staff of leaders and organisers. Would not the departure of the most energetic revolutionaries to take up the work of terror under circumstances like these weaken the fighting detachments upon which alone serious hopes can be placed? Would it not threaten to break the contacts that exist between the revolutionary organisations and the disunited, discontented masses, who are expressing protest, and who are ready for the fight, but who are weak simply because they are disunited? And these contacts are the only guarantee of our

success. We would not for one moment assert that individual strokes of heroism are of no importance at all. But it is our duty to utter a strong warning against devoting all attention to terror, against regarding it as the principal method of struggle, as so many at the present time are inclined to do. Terror can never become the regular means of warfare; at best, it can only be of use as one of the methods of a final onslaught. The question is, can we, at the present time, *issue the call* to storm the fortress? Apparently *Rabocheye Dyelo* thinks we can. At all events, it exclaims: "Form into storming columns!" But this is merely a display of excessive zeal. Our military forces mainly consist of volunteers and rebels. We have only a few detachments of regular troops, and even these are not mobilised, not linked up with each other, and not trained to form into any kind of military column, let alone a storming column. Under such circumstances, anyone capable of taking a general view of the conditions of our struggle, without losing sight of them at every "turn" in the historical progress of events, must clearly understand that at the present time our slogan cannot be "Storm the fortress," but should be "Organise properly the siege of the enemy fortress." In other words, the immediate task of our Party is not to call up our available forces for an immediate attack, but to call for the establishment of a revolutionary organisation capable of combining all the forces and of leading the movement not only in name but in deed, *i.e.*, an organisation that will be ready at any moment to support every protest and every outbreak, and to utilise these for the purpose of increasing and strengthening the military forces fit for the decisive battle.

The events of February and March have taught us such a thorough lesson that it is hardly likely that objection will be raised to the above conclusion on principle. But we are not called upon at the present moment to settle the question in principle, but in practice. We must not only be clear in our minds as to the kind of organisation we must have and the kind of work we must do; we must also draw up a definite *plan* of organisation that will enable us to set to work to build it from

all sides. In view of the urgency and importance of the question, we have taken it upon ourselves to submit to our comrades the outlines of such a plan, which is described in greater detail in a pamphlet now in preparation for the press.

In our opinion, the starting point of all our activities, the first practical step towards creating the organisation we desire, the thread that will guide us in unswervingly developing, deepening and expanding that organisation, is the establishment of an all-Russian political newspaper. A paper is what we need above all; without it we cannot systematically carry on that extensive and theoretically sound propaganda and agitation which is the principal and constant duty of the Social-Democrats in general, and the essential task of the present moment in particular, when interest in politics and in questions of socialism has been aroused among the widest sections of the population. Never before has the need been so strongly felt for supplementing individual agitation in the form of personal influence, local leaflets, pamphlets, etc., with general and regularly conducted agitation, such as can be carried on only with the assistance of a periodical press. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the frequency and regularity of publication (and distribution) of the paper would serve as an exact measure of the extent to which that primary and most essential branch of our military activities has been firmly established. Moreover, the paper must be an all-Russian paper. Unless we are able to exercise united influence upon the population and upon the government with the aid of the printed word, it will be utopian to think of combining other more complex, difficult, but more determined forms of exercising influence. Our movement, intellectually as well as practically and organisationally, suffers most of all from being scattered, from the fact that the vast majority of Social-Democrats are almost entirely immersed in purely local work, which narrows their horizon, limits their activities and affects their conspiratorial skill and training. It is in this state of disintegration that we must seek the deepest roots of the instability and vacillation to which I referred above. The *first step* towards removing this defect, and

transforming several local movements into a united all-Russian movement, is the establishment of a national all-Russian newspaper. Finally, it is a *political* paper we need. Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable in modern Europe. Without such a paper it will be absolutely impossible to fulfil our task, namely, to concentrate all the elements of political discontent and protest, and with them fertilize the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. The first step we have already accomplished. We have aroused in the working class a passion for "economic," factory exposures. We have now to take the second step: to arouse in every section of the population that is at all enlightened a passion for *political* exposures. We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged by the fact that the voice of political exposure is still feeble, rare and timid. This is not because of a general submission to political despotism, but because those who are able and ready to expose have no tribune from which to speak, because there is no audience to listen eagerly to, and approve of, what the orators say, and because the latter do not see anywhere among the people forces to whom it would be worth while directing their complaint against the "omnipotent" Russian government. But now all this is changing with enormous rapidity. Such a force now exists—the revolutionary proletariat. It has demonstrated its readiness, not only to listen to and to support an appeal for a political struggle, but to fight boldly in that struggle. We are now in a position, and it is our duty, to set up a tribune for the national exposure of the tsarist government. That tribune must be a Social-Democratic paper. The Russian working class, unlike other classes and strata of Russian society, betrays a constant desire for political knowledge; it demands illegal literature, not only during periods of unusual unrest, but at all times. Given that mass demand, given the training of experienced revolutionary leaders which has already begun, and given the great concentration of the working class, which makes it the real master in the working class quarters of large towns, in factory settlements and small in-

dustrial towns, the establishment of a political paper is a thing quite within the powers of the proletariat. Through the medium of the proletariat, the paper will penetrate to the urban petty bourgeoisie and to the village handicraftsmen and peasants, and will thus become a real, popular political paper.

But the role of a paper is not confined solely to the spreading of ideas, to political education and to attracting political allies. A paper is not merely a collective propagandist and collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. In this respect, it can be compared to the scaffolding erected around a building in construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour. With the aid of, and around, a paper, there will automatically develop an organisation that will engage, not only in local activities, but also in regular, general work; it will teach its members carefully to watch political events, to estimate their importance and their influence on the various sections of the population, and to devise suitable methods of influencing these events through the revolutionary party. The mere technical problem of procuring a regular supply of material for the newspaper and its regular distribution will make it necessary to create a network of agents of a united party, who will be in close contact with each other, will be acquainted with the general situation, will be accustomed to fulfilling the detailed functions of the national (all-Russian) work, and who will test their strength in the organisation of various kinds of revolutionary activities. This network of agents¹ will form the skeleton of the organisation we need, namely, one that is sufficiently large to embrace the whole country; sufficient-

¹ It is understood, of course, that these agents can act successfully only if they work in close conjunction with the local committees (groups or circles) of our Party. Indeed, the whole plan we have sketched can be carried out only with the most active support of the committees, which have already made more than one attempt to achieve a united party, and which, I am certain, sooner or later, and in one form or another, will achieve that unity.

ly wide and many-sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labour; sufficiently tried and tempered unswervingly to carry out its own work under all circumstances, at all "turns" and in unexpected contingencies; sufficiently flexible to be able to avoid open battle against the overwhelming and concentrated forces of the enemy, and yet able to take advantage of the clumsiness of the enemy and attack him at a time and place where he least expects attack. Today we are faced with the comparatively simple task of supporting students demonstrating in the streets of large towns; tomorrow, perhaps, we shall be faced with a more difficult task, as for instance, supporting a movement of the unemployed in some locality or other. The day after tomorrow, perhaps, we may have to be ready at our posts, to take a revolutionary part in some peasants' revolt. Today we must take advantage of the strained political situation created by the government's attack upon the Zemstvo. Tomorrow, we may have to support the indignation of the population against the outbreaks of some tsarist bashi-bazuk, and help, by boycott, agitation, demonstration, etc., to teach him such a lesson as will compel him to beat an open retreat. This degree of military preparedness can be created only by the constant activity of a regular army. If we unite our forces for conducting a common paper, that work will prepare and bring forward, not only the most competent propagandists, but also the most skilled organisers and the most talented political Party leaders, who will be able at the right moment to issue the call for the decisive battle, and will be capable of leading that battle.

In conclusion, we desire to say a few words in order to avoid possible misunderstandings. We have spoken continually about systematic and methodical preparation, but we had no desire in the least to suggest that the autocracy may fall only as a result of a properly prepared *siege* or organised attack. Such a view would be stupid and doctrinaire. On the contrary, it is quite possible, and historically far more probable, that the autocracy will fall under the pressure of one of those spontaneous outbursts or unforeseen political complications which con-

stantly threaten it from all sides. But no political party, if it desires to avoid adventurist tactics, can base its activities on expectations of such outbursts and complications. We must proceed along our road and steadily carry out our systematic work, and the less we rely on the unexpected, the less likely are we to be taken by surprise by a "historical turn."

May 1901.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?*

BURNING QUESTIONS OF OUR MOVEMENT

"... Party struggles give a party strength and life ... the best proof of the weakness of a party is its diffuseness and the blurring of clearly defined borders ... a party becomes stronger by purging itself. ..."

(From a letter by Lassalle to Marx, dated June 24, 1852)

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?¹

PREFACE

ACCORDING to the author's original plan, the present pamphlet was intended for the purpose of developing in greater detail the ideas that were expressed in the article "Where to Begin?"² (*Iskra*, No. 4, May 1901.) First of all, we must apologise to the reader for this belated fulfilment of the promise made in that article (and repeated in reply to many private enquiries and letters). One of the reasons for this belatedness was the attempt to combine all the Social-Democratic organisations abroad, which was undertaken in June last (1901).^{*} Naturally, one wanted to wait and see the results of this attempt, for had it been successful it would perhaps have been necessary to explain *Iskra's* views on organisation from another point of view. In any case, such success promised to put an end very quickly to the existence of two separate tendencies in Russian Social-Democracy. As the reader knows, the attempt failed, and, as we shall try to show further on, failure was inevitable after the new turn *Rabocheye Dyelo* took, in its issue No. 10, towards Economism. It was found to be absolutely necessary to commence a determined fight against this diffused, ill-defined, but very persistent tendency, which could have sprung up in many diverse forms. Accordingly, the original plan of the pamphlet was changed and considerably enlarged.

Its main theme was to have been the three questions presented in the article, "Where to Begin?," viz., the character and the principal content of our political agitation, our organisational tasks, and the plan for setting up, simultaneously, and from

¹ The pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* is given in this volume in the text as revised by the author for the 1908 edition.—*Ed.*

² See preceding article.—*Ed.*

all sides, a militant, all-Russian organisation. These questions have long engaged the mind of the author, and he tried to raise them in *Rabochaya Gazeta* at the time one of the unsuccessful attempts was made to revive that paper. (Cf. chap. V.) But the original plan to confine this pamphlet to these three questions and to express our views as far as possible in a positive form without or almost without entering into polemics proved quite impracticable for two reasons. One was that Economism proved to be more virile than we had supposed (we employ the term Economism in the broad sense as it was explained in *Iskra*, No. 12, December 1901, in an article entitled "A Conversation with Defenders of Economism," which was a synopsis, as it were, of the present pamphlet). It became unquestionably clear that the differences regarding the solution of the three problems mentioned were to be explained to a much greater degree by the fundamental antagonism between the two tendencies in Russian Social-Democracy than by differences over details. The second reason was that the astonishment displayed by the Economists concerning the views we expressed in *Iskra* revealed quite clearly that we often speak in different tongues, and therefore *cannot* come to any understanding without going over the whole argument *ab ovo*¹; that it was necessary to attempt in the simplest possible style, illustrated by numerous and concrete examples, *systematically* "to clear up" all the fundamental points of difference with all the Economists. I resolved to make this attempt to "clear up" these points, fully realising that it would greatly increase the size of the pamphlet and delay its publication, but I saw *no other way* of fulfilling the promise I made in the article "Where to Begin?" In apologising for the belated publication of the pamphlet, I also must apologise for its numerous literary shortcomings. I had to work *under great pressure*, and frequently had to interrupt the writing of it for other work.

The examination of the three questions mentioned above still comprises the main theme of this pamphlet, but I had to start out with the examination of two other, more general questions,

¹ Literally "from the egg"; from the beginning.—*Ed.*

viz., why is an "innocent" and "natural" slogan like "freedom of criticism" a genuine fighting watchword for us? And why can we not agree on even so important a question as the role of Social-Democracy in relation to the spontaneous mass movement? Furthermore, the exposition of our views on the character and the content of political agitation developed into an explanation of the difference between trade union politics and Social-Democratic politics, and the exposition of our views on organisational tasks developed into an explanation of the difference between primitive methods, which satisfy the Economists, and an organisation of revolutionaries, which in our opinion is essential. Moreover, I insist on the "plan" for a national political newspaper, the more so because of the weakness of the arguments that were levelled against it, and because the question that I put in the article "Where to Begin?" as to how we can set to work simultaneously, from all sides, to establish the organisation we require was never really answered. Finally, in the concluding part of this pamphlet I hope to prove that we did all we could to avoid a decisive rupture with the Economists, but that the rupture proved inevitable; that *Rabocheye Dyelo* acquired special, "historical," if you will, significance not so much because it expressed consistent Economism, but because it fully and strikingly expressed the confusion and vacillation that mark a *whole period* in the history of Russian Social-Democracy, and that, therefore, the polemics with *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which at first sight may seem excessively detailed, also acquire significance; for we can make no progress until we have completely liquidated this period.

February 1902.

I

DOGMATISM AND "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM"

A. WHAT IS "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM"?

"FREEDOM of criticism," this undoubtedly is the most fashionable slogan at the present time, and the one most frequently employed in the controversies between the Socialists and democrats of all countries. At first sight, nothing would appear to be more strange than the solemn appeals by one of the parties to the dispute for freedom of criticism. Can it be that some of the advanced parties have raised their voices against the constitutional law of the majority of European countries which guarantees freedom to science and scientific investigation? "Something must be wrong here," an onlooker, who has not yet fully appreciated the nature of the disagreements among the controversialists, will say when he hears this fashionable slogan repeated at every cross-road. "Evidently this slogan is one of the conventional phrases which, like a nickname, becomes legitimatised by use, and becomes almost a common noun," he will conclude.

In fact, it is no secret that two separate tendencies have been formed in international Social-Democracy.¹ The fight between

¹ Incidentally, this perhaps is the only occasion in the history of modern socialism in which controversies between various tendencies within the socialist movement have grown from national into international controversies; and this is extremely encouraging. Formerly, the disputes between the Lasalleans and the Eisenachers, between the Guesdists and the Possibilists, between the Fabians and the Social-Democrats, and between the Narodovolists and the Social-Democrats, remained purely national disputes, reflected purely national features and proceeded, as it were, on different planes. At the present time (this is quite evident now), the English Fabians, the French Ministerialists, the German Bernsteinists (revisionists—*Ed.*), and the Russian "critics"—all belong to the same family, all extol each other, learn from each other, and are rallying their forces against

these tendencies now flares up in a bright flame, and now dies down and smoulders under the ashes of imposing "resolutions for an armistice." What this "new" tendency, which adopts a "critical" attitude towards "obsolete doctrinaire" Marxism, represents has been *stated* with sufficient precision by Bernstein, and *demonstrated* by Millerand.**

Social-Democracy must change from a party of the social revolution into a democratic party of social reforms. Bernstein has surrounded this political demand with a whole battery of symmetrically arranged "new" arguments and reasonings. The possibility of putting socialism on a scientific basis and of proving that it is necessary and inevitable from the point of view of the materialist conception of history was denied, as also were the facts of growing impoverishment and proletarianisation and the intensification of capitalist contradictions. The very conception, "*ultimate aim*," was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was absolutely rejected. It was denied that there is any difference in principle between liberalism and socialism. *The theory of the class struggle* was rejected on the grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society, governed according to the will of the majority, etc.

Thus, the demand for a definite change from revolutionary Social-Democracy to bourgeois social-reformism was accompanied by a no less definite turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism. As this criticism of Marxism has been going on for a long time now, from the political platform, from university chairs, in numerous pamphlets and in a number of scientific works, as the younger generation of the educated classes has been systematically trained for decades on this criticism, it is not surprising that the "new, critical" tendency in Social-Democracy should spring up, all complete, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. The content of this new

"doctrinaire" Marxism.* Perhaps in this first really international battle with socialist opportunism, international revolutionary Social-Democracy will become sufficiently strengthened to put an end to the political reaction that has long reigned in Europe.

tendency did not have to grow and develop, it was transferred bodily from bourgeois literature to socialist literature.

To proceed. If Bernstein's theoretical criticism and political yearnings are still obscure to anyone, the French have taken the trouble to demonstrate the "new method." In this instance, also, France has justified its old reputation as the country in which "more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a decision . . ." (Engels, in his introduction to Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire*.) The French Socialists have begun, not to theorise, but to act. The more developed democratic political conditions in France have permitted them to put Bernsteinism into practice immediately, with all its consequences. Millerand has provided an excellent example of practical Bernsteinism; not without reason did Bernstein and Vollmar rush so zealously to defend and praise him! Indeed, if Social-Democracy, in essence, is merely a reformist party, and must be bold enough to admit this openly, then not only has a Socialist the right to join a bourgeois cabinet, it is even his duty always to strive to do so. If democracy, in essence, means the abolition of class domination, then why should not a Socialist minister charm the whole bourgeois world by orations on class co-operation? Why should he not remain in the cabinet even after the shooting down of workers by gendarmes has exposed, for the hundredth and thousandth time, the real nature of the democratic co-operation of classes? Why should he not personally take part in welcoming the tsar, for whom the French Socialists now have no other sobriquet than "Hero of the Knout, Gallows and Banishment" (*knouter, pendeur et déportateur*)? And the reward for this utter humiliation and self-degradation of socialism in the face of the whole world, for the corruption of the socialist consciousness of the working class—the only basis that can guarantee our victory—the reward for this is imposing *plans* for niggardly reforms, so niggardly in fact that much more has been obtained from bourgeois governments!

He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new "critical" tendency in socialism is nothing more nor less than a new species of *opportunism*. And if we judge

people not by the brilliant uniforms they deck themselves in, not by the imposing appellations they give themselves, but by their actions, and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that "freedom of criticism" means freedom for an opportunistic tendency in Social-Democracy, the freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic reformist party, the freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism.

"Freedom" is a grand word, but under the banner of free trade the most predatory wars were conducted; under the banner of free labour, the toilers were robbed. The modern use of the term "freedom of criticism" contains the same inherent falsehood. Those who are really convinced that they have advanced science would demand, not freedom for the new views to continue side by side with the old, but the substitution of the new views for the old. The cry "Long live freedom of criticism," that is heard today, too strongly calls to mind the fable of the empty barrel.*

We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and are under their almost constant fire. We have combined voluntarily, precisely for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not to retreat into the adjacent marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now several among us begin to cry out: let us go into this marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: how conservative you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the right to invite you to take a better road! Oh yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render *you* every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word "freedom"; for we too are "free" to go where we please, free not only to fight against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh.

B. THE NEW ADVOCATES OF "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM"

Now, this slogan ("freedom of criticism") is solemnly advanced in No. 10 of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, the organ of the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, not as a theoretical postulate, but as a political demand, as a reply to the question: "is it possible to unite the Social-Democratic organisations operating abroad?"—"in order that unity may be durable, there must be freedom of criticism." (P. 36.)

From this statement two very definite conclusions must be drawn: 1) that *Rabocheye Dyelo* has taken the opportunist tendency in international Social-Democracy under its wing; and 2) that *Rabocheye Dyelo* demands freedom for opportunism in Russian Social-Democracy. We shall examine these conclusions.

Rabocheye Dyelo is "particularly" displeased with *Iskra's* and *Zarya's* "inclination to predict a rupture between the *Mountain* and the *Gironde* in international Social-Democracy."¹

"Generally speaking," writes Krichevsky, editor of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, "this talk about the *Mountain* and the *Gironde* that is heard in the ranks of Social-Democracy represents a shallow historical analogy, which looks strange when it comes from the pen of a Marxist. The *Mountain* and the *Gironde* did not represent two different temperaments, or intellectual tendencies, as ideologist historians may think, but two different classes or strata—the middle bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat on the other. In the modern socialist movement, however, there is no conflict of class interests; the socialist movement in its entirety, *all* of its diverse forms [B. K.'s italics], including the most pronounced Bernsteinists, stand on the basis of the class interests of the proletariat and of the proletarian class struggle, for its political and economic emancipation." (Pp. 32-33.)

A bold assertion! Has not B. Krichevsky heard the fact, long ago noted, that it is precisely the extensive participation of the "academic" *stratum* in the socialist movement in recent years

¹ A comparison between the two tendencies among the revolutionary proletariat (the revolutionary and the opportunist) and the two tendencies among the revolutionary bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century (the Jacobin, known as the *Mountain*, and the Girondists) was made in a leading article in No. 2 of *Iskra*, February 1901. This article was written by Plekhanov.* The Cadets, the *Bezzaglavtsi*** and the Mensheviks to this day love to refer to the Jacobinism in Russian Social-Democracy but they prefer to remain silent about or . . . to forget the circumstances that Plekhanov used this term for the first time against the Right wing of Social-Democracy. [Author's note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.]

that has secured the rapid spread of Bernsteinism? And what is most important—on what does our author base his opinion that even “the most pronounced Bernsteinists” stand on the basis of the class struggle for the political and economic emancipation of the proletariat? No one knows. This determined defence of the most pronounced Bernsteinists is not supported by any kind of argument whatever. Apparently, the author believes that if he repeats what the pronounced Bernsteinists say about themselves, his assertion requires no proof. But can anything more “shallow” be imagined than an opinion of a whole tendency that is based on nothing more than what the representatives of that tendency say about themselves? Can anything more shallow be imagined than the subsequent “homily” about the two different and even diametrically opposite types, or paths, of Party development? (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, pp. 34-35.) The German Social-Democrats, you see, recognise complete freedom of criticism, but the French do not, and it is precisely the latter that present an example of the “harmfulness of intolerance.”

To which we reply that the very example B. Krichevsky quotes proves that those who regard history literally from the Illovay-sky* point of view sometimes describe themselves as Marxists. There is no need whatever, in explaining the unity of the German Socialist Party and the dismembered state of the French Socialist Party, to search for the special features in the history of the respective countries, to compare the conditions of military semi-absolutism in the one country with republican parliamentarism in the other, or to analyse the effects of the Paris Commune and the effects of the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany**; to compare the economic life and economic development of the two countries, or recall that “the unexampled growth of German Social-Democracy” was accompanied by a strenuous struggle, unexampled in the history of socialism, not only against mistaken theories (Mühlberger, Dühring,¹ the So-

¹ At the time Engels hurled his attack against Dühring, many representatives of German Social-Democracy inclined towards the latter's views, and accusations of acerbity, intolerance, uncomradely polemics, etc., were even publicly hurled at Engels at the Party congress. At the Congress of 1877, Most, and his supporters, moved a resolution to prohibit the

cialists of the Chair*), but also against mistaken tactics (Lassalle), etc., etc. All that is superfluous! The French quarrel among themselves because they are intolerant; the Germans are united because they are good boys.

And observe, this piece of matchless profundity is intended to "refute" the fact which is a complete answer to the defence of Bernsteinism. The question as to whether the Bernsteinists *do stand* on the basis of the class struggle of the proletariat can be completely and irrevocably answered only by historical experience. Consequently, the example of France is the most important one in this respect, because France is the only country in which the Bernsteinists attempted to *stand* independently, on their own feet, with the warm approval of their German colleagues (and partly also of the Russian opportunists). (Cf. *Rabocheye Dyelo*, Nos. 2-3, pp. 83-84.)** The reference to the "intolerance" of the French, apart from its "historical" significance (in the Nozdrev sense***), turns out to be merely an attempt to obscure a very unpleasant fact with angry invectives.

But we are not even prepared to make a present of the Germans to B. Krichevsky and to the numerous other champions of "freedom of criticism." The "most pronounced Bernsteinists" are still tolerated in the ranks of the German Party only because they *submit* to the Hanover resolution, which emphatically rejected Bernstein's "amendments," and to the Lübeck resolution, which, notwithstanding the diplomatic terms in which it is couched, contains a direct warning to Bernstein.**** It is a debatable point, from the standpoint of the interests of the German Party, whether diplomacy was appropriate and whether, in this case, a bad peace is better than a good quarrel; in short,

publication of Engels' articles in *Vorwärts* because "they do not interest the overwhelming majority of the readers," and Vahlteich declared that the publication of these articles had caused great damage to the Party, that Dühring had also rendered services to Social-Democracy: "We must utilise everyone in the interest of the Party; let the professors engage in polemics if they care to do so, but *Vorwärts* is not the place in which to conduct them." (*Vorwärts*, No. 65, June 6, 1877.) Here we have another example of the defence of "freedom of criticism," and it would do our legal critics and illegal opportunists, who love so much to quote examples from the Germans, a deal of good to ponder over it!

opinions may differ in regard to the expediency, or not, of the *methods* employed to reject Bernsteinism, but one cannot fail to see the fact that the German Party *did* reject Bernsteinism on two occasions. Therefore, to think that the German example endorses the thesis: "The most pronounced Bernsteinists stand on the basis of the proletarian class struggle, for its economic and political emancipation," means failing absolutely to understand what is going on before one's eyes.

More than that. As we have already observed, *Rabocheye Dyelo* comes before *Russian Social-Democracy*, demands "freedom of criticism," and defends Bernsteinism. Apparently it came to the conclusion that we were unfair to our "critics" and Bernsteinists. To whom were we unfair, when and how? What was the unfairness? About this not a word. *Rabocheye Dyelo* does not name a single Russian critic or Bernsteinist! All that is left for us to do is to make one of two possible suppositions: first, that the unfairly treated party is none other than *Rabocheye Dyelo* itself (and that is confirmed by the fact that, in the two articles in No. 10, reference is made only to the insults hurled at *Rabocheye Dyelo* by *Zarya* and *Iskra*). If that is the case, how is the strange fact to be explained that *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which always vehemently dissociates itself from Bernsteinism, could not defend itself, without putting in a word on behalf of the "most pronounced Bernsteinists" and of freedom of criticism? The second supposition is that third persons have been treated unfairly. If the second supposition is correct, then why are these persons not named?

We see, therefore, that *Rabocheye Dyelo* is continuing to play the game of hide-and-seek that it has played (as we shall prove further on) ever since it commenced publication. And note the *first* practical application of this greatly extolled "freedom of criticism." As a matter of fact, not only has it now been reduced to abstention from all criticism, but also to abstention from expressing independent views altogether. The very *Rabocheye Dyelo* which avoids mentioning Russian Bernsteinism as if it were a secret disease (to use Starover's* apt expression) proposes, for the treatment of this disease, *to copy word for word* the

latest German prescription for the treatment, of the German variety of the disease! Instead of freedom of criticism—slavish (worse: monkey-like) imitation! The very same social and political content of modern international opportunism reveals itself in a variety of ways according to its national characteristics. In one country the opportunists long ago came out under a separate flag, while in others they ignored theory and in practice conducted a radical-socialist policy. In a third country, several members of the revolutionary party have deserted to the camp of opportunism and strive to achieve their aims not by an open struggle for principles and for new tactics, but by gradual, unobserved and, if one may so express it, unpunishable corruption of their Party. In a fourth country again, similar deserters employ the same methods in the gloom of political slavery, and with an extremely peculiar combination of "legal" with "illegal" activity, etc., etc. To talk about freedom of criticism and Bernsteinism as a condition for uniting the *Russian* Social-Democrats, and not to explain how *Russian* Bernsteinism has manifested itself, and what fruits it has borne, means talking for the purpose of saying nothing.

We shall try, if only in a few words, to say what *Rabocheye Dyelo* did not want to say (or perhaps did not even understand).

C. CRITICISM IN RUSSIA

The peculiar position of Russia in regard to the point we are examining is that *the very beginning* of the spontaneous labour movement on the one hand, and the change of progressive public opinion towards Marxism on the other, was marked by the combination of obviously heterogeneous elements under a common flag for the purpose of fighting the common enemy (obsolete social and political views).¹ We refer to the heyday of "legal Marxism." Speaking generally, this was an extremely curious phenomenon that no one in the 'eighties or the beginning of the 'nineties would have believed possible. In a country ruled by an autocracy, in which the press is completely shackled, and in a period of intense political reaction in which even the

¹ A reference to the Narodniki.—*Ed.*

tiniest outgrowth of political discontent and protest was suppressed, the theory of revolutionary Marxism suddenly forces its way into the *censored* literature, written in Æsopian¹ language, but understood by the "interested." The government had accustomed itself to regarding only the theory of (revolutionary) *Narodnaya Volya*-ism as dangerous, without observing its internal evolution, as is usually the case, and rejoicing at the criticism levelled against it *no matter from what side it came*. Quite a considerable time elapsed (according to our Russian calculations) before the government realised what had happened and the unwieldy army of censors and gendarmes discovered the new enemy and flung itself upon him. Meanwhile, Marxian books were published one after another, Marxian journals and newspapers were published, nearly everyone became a Marxist, Marxism was flattered, the Marxists were courted and the book publishers rejoiced at the extraordinary, ready sale of Marxian literature. It was quite natural, therefore, that among the Marxian novices who were caught in this atmosphere, there should be more than one "author who got a swelled head. . . ."

We can now speak calmly of this period as of an event of the past. It is no secret that the brief period in which Marxism blossomed on the surface of our literature was called forth by the alliance between people of extreme and of extremely moderate views.* In point of fact, the latter were bourgeois democrats; and this was the conclusion (so strikingly confirmed by their subsequent "critical" development) that intruded itself on the minds of certain persons even when the "alliance" was still intact.²

That being the case, does not the responsibility for the subsequent "confusion" rest mainly upon the revolutionary Social-Democrats who entered into alliance with these future "critics"? This question, together with a reply in the affirmative, is sometimes heard from people with excessively rigid views. But these

¹ *I.e.*, in parables, like *Æsop's Fables*.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² This refers to an article by K. Tulin [Lenin—*Ed.*] written against Struve. The article was compiled from an essay entitled "The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature." [Author's note to the 1908 edition, See *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 457-66.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*]

people are absolutely wrong. Only those who have no self-reliance can fear to enter into temporary alliances even with unreliable people; not a single political party could exist without entering into such alliances. The combination with the "legal Marxists" was in its way the first really political alliance contracted by Russian Social-Democrats. Thanks to this alliance, an astonishingly rapid victory was obtained over Narodism, and Marxian ideas (even though in a vulgarised form) became very widespread. Moreover, the alliance was not concluded altogether without "conditions." The proof: the burning by the censor, in 1895, of the Marxian symposium, *Materials on the Problem of the Economic Development of Russia*. If the literary agreement with the "legal Marxists" can be compared with a political alliance, then that book can be compared with a political treaty.

The rupture, of course, did not occur because the "allies" proved to be bourgeois democrats. On the contrary, the representatives of the latter tendency were the natural and desirable allies of Social-Democracy in so far as its democratic tasks that were brought to the front by the prevailing situation in Russia were concerned. But an essential condition for such an alliance must be complete liberty for Socialists to reveal to the working class that its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie. However, the Bernsteinian and "critical" tendency, to which the majority of the "legal Marxists" turned, deprived the Socialists of this liberty and corrupted socialist consciousness by vulgarising Marxism, by preaching the toning down of social antagonisms, by declaring the idea of the social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat to be absurd, by restricting the labour movement and the class struggle to narrow trade unionism and to a "realistic" struggle for petty, gradual reforms. This was tantamount to the bourgeois democrat's denial of socialism's right to independence and, consequently, of its right to existence; in practice it meant a striving to convert the nascent labour movement into a tail of the liberals.

Naturally, under such circumstances a rupture was necessary. But the "peculiar" feature of Russia manifested itself in that

this rupture simply meant the elimination of the Social-Democrats from the most accessible and widespread "legal" literature. The "ex-Marxists" who took up the flag of "criticism," and who obtained almost a monopoly of the "criticism" of Marxism, entrenched themselves in this literature. Catchwords like: "Against orthodoxy" and "Long live freedom of criticism" (now repeated by *Rabocheye Dyelo*) immediately became the fashion, and the fact that neither the censor nor the gendarmes could resist this fashion is apparent from the publication of *three* Russian editions of Bernstein's celebrated book (celebrated in the Herostratus sense) and from the fact that the books by Bernstein, Prokopovich and others were recommended by Zubatov.* (*Iskra*, No. 10.) Upon the Social-Democrats was now imposed a task that was difficult in itself, and made incredibly more difficult by purely external obstacles, *viz.*, the task of fighting against the new tendency. And this tendency did not confine itself to the sphere of literature. The turn towards criticism was accompanied by the turn towards Economism that was taken by Social-Democratic practical workers.

The manner in which the contacts and mutual inter-dependence of legal criticism and illegal Economism arose and grew is an interesting subject in itself, and may very well be treated in a special article. It is sufficient to note here that these contacts undoubtedly existed. The notoriety deservedly acquired by the *Credo* was due precisely to the frankness with which it formulated these contacts and laid down the fundamental political tendencies of Economism, *viz.*, let the workers carry on the economic struggle (it would be more correct to say the trade union struggle, because the latter also embraces specifically labour politics), and let the Marxian intelligentsia merge with the liberals for the political "struggle." Thus it turned out that trade union work "among the people" meant fulfilling the first part of this task, and legal criticism meant fulfilling the second part. This statement proved to be such an excellent weapon against Economism that, had there been no *Credo*, it would have been worth inventing.

The *Credo* was not invented, but it was published without the

consent and perhaps even against the will of its authors. At all events the present writer, who was partly responsible for dragging this new "programme" into the light of day,¹ has heard complaints and reproaches to the effect that copies of the *résumé* of their views which was dubbed the *Credo* were distributed and even published in the press together with the protest! We refer to this episode because it reveals a very peculiar state of mind among our Economists, *viz.*, a fear of publicity. This is a feature of Economism generally, and not of the authors of the *Credo* alone. It was revealed by that most outspoken and honest advocate of Economism, *Rabochaya Mysl*, and by *Rabocheye Dyelo* (which was indignant over the publication of Economist documents in the *Vademecum**), as well as by the Kiev Committee, which two years ago refused to permit the publication of its *profession de foi*,² together with a repudiation of it,³ and by many other individual representatives of Economism.

This fear of criticism displayed by the advocates of freedom of criticism cannot be attributed solely to craftiness (although no doubt craftiness has something to do with it: it would be unwise to expose the young and as yet puny movement to the enemies' attack!). No, the majority of the Economists quite sincerely disapprove (and by the very nature of Economism they must disapprove) of all theoretical controversies, factional disagreements, of broad political questions, of schemes for organising revolutionaries, etc. "Leave all this sort of thing to the exiles abroad!" said a fairly consistent Economist to me one day, and thereby he expressed a very widespread (and purely trade unionist) view: our business, he said, is the labour movement, the labour organisations, here, in our localities; all the rest are

¹ Reference is made here to the *Protest Signed by the Seventeen* against the *Credo*. The present writer took part in drawing up this protest (the end of 1899). The protest and the *Credo* were published abroad in the spring of 1900. [See *Selected Works*, Vol. I.—Ed.] It is now known from the article written by Madame Kuskova, I think in *Byloye [Past]*, that she was the author of the *Credo*, and that Mr. Prokopovich was very prominent among the Economists abroad at that time. [Author's note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.]

² Profession of faith.—Ed.

³ Written by Lenin.—Ed.

merely the inventions of doctrinaires, an "exaggeration of the importance of ideology," as the authors of the letter, published in *Iskra*, No. 12, expressed it, in unison with *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10.

The question now arises: seeing what the peculiar features of Russian "criticism" and Russian Bernsteinism were, what should those who desired to oppose opportunism, in deeds and not merely in words, have done? First of all, they should have made efforts to resume the theoretical work that was only just begun in the period of "legal Marxism," and that has now again fallen on the shoulders of the illegal workers. Unless such work is undertaken the successful growth of the movement is impossible. Secondly, they should have actively combated legal "criticism" that was greatly corrupting people's minds. Thirdly, they should have actively counteracted the confusion and vacillation prevailing in practical work, and should have exposed and repudiated every conscious or unconscious attempt to degrade our programme and tactics.

That *Rabocheye Dyelo* did none of these things is a well-known fact, and further on we shall deal with this well-known fact from various aspects. At the moment, however, we desire merely to show what a glaring contradiction there is between the demand for "freedom of criticism" and the peculiar features of our native criticism and Russian Economism. Indeed, glance at the text of the resolution by which the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad endorsed the point of view of *Rabocheye Dyelo*.

"In the interests of the further ideological development of Social-Democracy, we recognise the freedom to criticise Social-Democratic theory in Party literature to be absolutely necessary in so far as this criticism does not run counter to the class and revolutionary character of this theory." (*Two Congresses*, p. 10.*)

And what is the argument behind this resolution? The resolution "in its first part coincides with the resolution of the Lübeck Party Congress on Bernstein. . . ." In the simplicity of their souls the "Leaguers" failed to observe the *testimonium paupertatis* (certificate of poverty) they give themselves by this piece of imitateness! . . . "But . . . in its second part, it restricts

freedom of criticism much more than did the Lübeck Party Congress."

So the League's resolution was directed against Russian Bernsteinism? If it was not, then the reference to Lübeck is utterly absurd! But it is not true to say that it "restricts freedom of criticism." In passing their Hanover resolution, the Germans, point by point, rejected *precisely the amendments* proposed by Bernstein, while in their Lübeck resolution they cautioned *Bernstein personally*, and named him in the resolution. Our "free" imitators, however, *do not make a single reference to a single manifestation* of Russian "criticism" and Russian Economism and, in view of this omission, the bare reference to the class and revolutionary character of the theory leaves exceedingly wide scope for misinterpretation, particularly when the League refuses to identify "so-called Economism" with opportunism. (*Two Congresses*, p. 8, par. 1.) But all this *en passant*. The important thing to note is that the opportunist attitude towards revolutionary Social-Democrats in Russia is the very opposite of that in Germany. In Germany, as we know, revolutionary Social-Democrats are in favour of preserving what is: they stand in favour of the old programme and tactics which are universally known, and after many decades of experience have become clear in all their details. The "critics" desire to introduce changes, and as these critics represent an insignificant minority, and as they are very shy and halting in their revisionist efforts, one can understand the motives of the majority in confining themselves to the dry rejection of "innovations." In Russia, however, it is the critics and Economists who are in favour of preserving what is: the "critics" wish us to continue to regard them as Marxists, and to guarantee them the "freedom of criticism" which they enjoyed to the full (for, as a matter of fact, they never recognised any kind of *Party ties*,¹ and, moreover, we

¹ The absence of public Party ties and Party traditions by itself marks such a cardinal difference between Russia and Germany that it should have warned all sensible Socialists against being blindly imitative. But here is an example of the lengths to which "freedom of criticism" goes in Russia. Mr. Bulgakov, the Russian critic, utters the following reprimand to the Austrian critic, Hertz: "Notwithstanding the independ-

never had a generally recognised Party organ which could "restrict" freedom of criticism even by giving advice); the Economists want the revolutionaries to recognise the "competency of the present movement" (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 25), *i.e.*, to recognise the "legitimacy" of what exists; they do not want the "ideologists" to try to "divert" the movement from the path that "is determined by the interaction of material elements and material environment" (Letter published in *Iskra*, No. 12); they want recognition "for the only struggle that the workers can conduct under present conditions," which in their opinion is the struggle "which they are actually conducting at the present time." (Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl*, p. 14.) We revolutionary Social-Democrats, on the contrary, are dissatisfied with this worshipping of spontaneity, *i.e.*, worshipping what is "at the present time"; we demand that the tactics that have prevailed in recent years be changed; we declare that "before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all firmly and definitely draw the lines of demarcation." (See announcement of the publication of *Iskra*.¹) In a word, the Germans stand for what is and reject the changes; we demand changes, and reject subservience to and conciliation with what is.

This "little" difference our "free" copyists of German resolutions failed to notice!

D. ENGELS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THEORETICAL STRUGGLE

"Dogmatism, doctrinairism," "ossification of the Party—the inevitable retribution that follows the violent strait-lacing of
ence of his conclusions, Hertz, on this point [on co-operative societies] apparently remains tied by the opinions of his party, and although he disagrees with it in details, he dare not reject common principles." (*Capitalism and Agriculture*, Vol. II, p. 287.) The subject of a politically enslaved state, in which nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of the population are corrupted to the marrow of their bones by political subservience, and completely lack the conception of Party honour and Party ties, superciliously reprimands a citizen of a constitutional state for being excessively "tied by the opinion of his party"! Our illegal organisations have nothing else to do, of course, but draw up resolutions about freedom of criticism. . . .

¹See "Declaration by the Editorial Board of *Iskra*" in this volume.—*Ed.*

thought," these are the enemies against which the knightly champions of "freedom of criticism" rise in arms in *Rabocheye Dyelo*. We are very glad that this question has been brought up and we would propose only to add to it another question:

Who are to be the judges?

Before us lie two publishers' announcements. One, *The Programme of the Periodical Organ of the League of Russian Social-Democrats—Rabocheye Dyelo* (Reprint from No. 1 of *Rabocheye Dyelo*), and the other, *The Announcement of the Resumption of Publication by the Emancipation of Labour Group*.^{*} Both are dated 1899, when the "crisis of Marxism" had long since been discussed. And what do we find? In the first production, we would seek in vain for any manifestation or definite elucidation of the position the new organ intends to occupy on this question. Of theoretical work and the urgent tasks that now confront it, not a word is said in this programme, nor in the supplements to it that were passed by the Third Congress of the League in 1901. (*Two Congresses*, pp. 15-18.) During the whole of this time, the editorial board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* ignored theoretical questions, notwithstanding the fact that these questions were agitating the minds of Social-Democrats in all countries.

The other announcement, on the contrary, first of all points to the diminution of interest in theory observed in recent years, imperatively demands "vigilant attention to the theoretical aspect of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat," and calls for "ruthless criticism of the Bernsteinian and other anti-revolutionary tendencies" in our movement. The issues of *Zarya* that have appeared show how this programme was carried out.

Thus we see that high-sounding phrases against the ossification of thought, etc., conceal carelessness and helplessness in the development of theoretical ideas. The case of the Russian Social-Democrats strikingly illustrates the fact observed in the whole of Europe (and long ago noted also by the German Marxists) that the notorious freedom of criticism implies, not the substitution of one theory for another, but freedom from

any complete and thought-out theory; it implies eclecticism and absence of principle. Those who are in the least acquainted with the actual state of our movement cannot but see that the spread of Marxism was accompanied by a certain lowering of theoretical standards. Quite a number of people, with very little, and even totally lacking theoretical training, joined the movement for the sake of its practical significance and its practical successes. We can judge, therefore, how tactless *Rabocheye Dyelo* is when, with an air of invincibility, it quotes the statement of Marx: "A single step of the real movement is more important than a dozen programmes." To repeat these words in the epoch of theoretical chaos is like wishing mourners at a funeral "many happy returns of the day." Moreover, these words of Marx are taken from his letter on the Gotha Programme,* in which he *sharply condemns* the eclecticism in the formulation of principles: If you must combine, Marx wrote to the Party leaders, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not haggle over principles, do not make "concessions" in theory. This was Marx's idea, and yet there are people among us who strive—in his name!—to belittle the significance of theory.

Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism is combined with absorption in the narrowest forms of practical activity. The importance of theory for Russian Social-Democrats is still greater for three reasons, which are often forgotten:

The first is that our Party is only in the process of formation, its features are but just becoming outlined, and it has not yet completely settled its accounts with other tendencies in revolutionary thought which threaten to divert the movement from the proper path. Indeed, in very recent times we have observed (as Axelrod long ago warned the Economists would happen) a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary tendencies. Under such circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" mistake may give rise to most deplorable consequences, and only the short-sighted would consider factional disputes

and strict distinction of shades to be inopportune and superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for many, many years to come may be determined by the strengthening of one or the other "shade."

The second reason is that the Social-Democratic movement is essentially an international movement. This does not merely mean that we must combat national chauvinism. It also means that a movement that is starting in a young country can be successful only on the condition that it assimilates the experience of other countries. In order to assimilate this experience, it is not sufficient merely to be acquainted with it, or simply to transcribe the latest resolutions. A critical attitude is required towards this experience, and ability to subject it to independent tests. Only those who realise how much the modern labour movement has grown in strength will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to fulfil this task.

The third reason is that the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. Further on we shall deal with the political and organisational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At the moment, we merely wish to state that *the role of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by an advanced theory*. To understand what this means concretely, let the reader call to mind the predecessors of Russian Social-Democracy like Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and the brilliant band of revolutionaries of the 'seventies; let him ponder over the world significance which Russian literature is now acquiring; let him . . . Oh! But that is enough!

Let us quote what Engels said in 1874 concerning the significance of theory in the Social-Democratic movement. Engels recognises *not two* forms of the great struggle Social-Democracy is conducting (political and economic), as is the fashion among us, *but three, adding to the first two the theoretical struggle*. His recommendations to the German labour movement, which had become practically and politically strong, are so in-

structive from the point of view of present-day controversies that we hope the reader will forgive us for quoting a long passage from his Introduction to *The Peasant War in Germany*, which long ago became a literary rarity.

"The German workers have two important advantages over those of the rest of Europe. First, they belong to the most theoretical people of Europe; they have retained that sense of theory which the so-called 'educated' people of Germany have totally lost. Without German philosophy which preceded it, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism (the only scientific socialism that has ever existed) would never have come into existence. Without a sense of theory among the workers, this scientific socialism would never have become part of their flesh and blood as it has. What an immeasurable advantage this is may be seen, on the one hand, from the indifference of the English labour movement towards all theory, which is one of the chief reasons why it moves so slowly, in spite of the splendid organisation of the individual unions; on the other hand, from the mischief and confusion wrought by Proudhonism, in its original form among the French and Belgians, and in the further caricatured form at the hands of Bakunin, among the Spaniards and Italians.

"The second advantage is that, chronologically speaking, the Germans were almost the last to appear in the labour movement. Just as German theoretical socialism will never forget that it rests on the shoulders of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, three men who, in spite of all their phantastic notions and utopianism, have their place among the most eminent thinkers of all time, and whose genius anticipated innumerable truths the correctness of which can now be scientifically proved, so the practical German labour movement must never forget that it has developed on the shoulders of the English and French movements, that it was able simply to utilise their dearly-bought experience, and could now avoid their mistakes which in their time were mostly unavoidable. Without the English trade unions and the French workers' political struggle which came before, without the gigantic impulse given especially by the Paris Commune, where would we now be?

"It must be said to the credit of the German workers that they exploited the advantages of their situation with rare understanding. For the first time in the history of the labour movement, the three sides of the struggle, the theoretical, the political and the practical economic (resistance to the capitalists), are being conducted in harmony, co-ordination and in a planned way. It is precisely in this, as it were, concentric attack, that the strength and invincibility of the German movement lies.

"It is due to this advantageous situation on the one hand, to the insular peculiarities of the English and to the forcible suppression of the French movements on the other, that the German workers for the moment form the vanguard of the proletarian struggle. How long events will allow them to occupy this post of honour cannot be foreseen. But as long as they occupy it, let us hope that they will discharge their duties in the proper manner. To this end it will be necessary to redouble our energies in every sphere of struggle and agitation. It is the specific duty of the leaders to gain an ever-clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free them-

selves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old conception of the world, and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, having become a science, must be pursued as a science, *i.e.*, it must be studied. The task will be to spread with increased enthusiasm, among the masses of the workers, the ever-clearer insight thus acquired, to knit together ever more firmly the organisation both of the Party and of the trade unions. . . .

"If the German workers proceed in this way, they will not march exactly at the head of the movement—it is not in the interests of the movement that the workers of any one country should march at its head—but they will occupy an honourable place in the battle line, and they will stand armed for battle when either unexpectedly grave trials or momentous events demand heightened courage, heightened determination and power to act."¹

Engels' words proved prophetic. Within a few years, the German workers were subjected to severe trials in the form of the Anti-Socialist Law; but they were fully armed to meet the situation, and succeeded in emerging from it victoriously.

The Russian proletariat will have to undergo trials immeasurably more severe; it will have to take up the fight against a monster, compared with which the Anti-Socialist Law in a constitutional country is but a pigmy. History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is *more revolutionary than all the immediate tasks* that confront the proletariat of any other country. The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark not only of European but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction would place the Russian proletariat in the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. We are right in counting upon acquiring the honourable title already earned by our predecessors, the revolutionaries of the 'seventies, if we succeed in inspiring our movement—which is a thousand times wider and deeper—with the same devoted determination and vigour.

¹ Third edition, Leipzig, 1875.

II

THE SPONTANEITY OF THE MASSES AND THE CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

WE have said that our movement, much wider and deeper than the movement of the 'seventies, must be inspired with the same devoted determination and energy that inspired the movement at that time. Indeed, no one, we think, has up to now doubted that the strength of the modern movement lies in the awakening of the masses (principally, the industrial proletariat), and that its weakness lies in the lack of consciousness and initiative among the revolutionary leaders.

However, a most astonishing discovery has been made recently, which threatens to overthrow all the views that have hitherto prevailed on this question. This discovery was made by *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which in its controversy with *Iskra* and *Zarya* did not confine itself to making objections on separate points, but tried to ascribe "general disagreements" to a more profound cause—to the "disagreement concerning the estimation of the *relative* importance of the spontaneous and consciously 'methodical' element." *Rabocheye Dyelo's* indictment reads: "*belittling the importance of the objective, or spontaneous, element of development.*"¹ To this we say: if the controversy with *Iskra* and *Zarya* resulted in absolutely nothing more than causing *Rabocheye Dyelo* to hit upon these "general disagreements," that single result would give us considerable satisfaction, so important is this thesis and so clearly does it illuminate the quintessence of the present-day theoretical and political differences that exist among Russian Social-Democrats.

That is why the question of the relation between conscious-

¹ *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, 1901, pp. 17-18. (R. D.'s italics.)

ness and spontaneity is of such enormous general interest, and that is why this question must be dealt with in great detail.

A. THE BEGINNING OF THE SPONTANEOUS REVIVAL

In the previous chapter we pointed out how *universally* absorbed the educated youth of Russia was in the theories of Marxism in the middle of the 'nineties. The strikes that followed the famous St. Petersburg industrial war of 1896 * assumed a similar wholesale character. The fact that these strikes spread over the whole of Russia clearly showed how deep the reviving popular movement was, and if we must speak of the "spontaneous element" then, of course, we must admit that this strike movement certainly bore a spontaneous character. But there is a difference between spontaneity and spontaneity. Strikes occurred in Russia in the 'seventies and in the 'sixties (and also in the first half of the nineteenth century), and these strikes were accompanied by the "spontaneous" destruction of machinery, etc. Compared with these "riots" the strikes of the 'nineties might even be described as "conscious," to such an extent do they mark the progress which the labour movement had made for that period. This shows that the "spontaneous element," in essence, represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an *embryonic form*. Even the primitive riots expressed the awakening of consciousness to a certain extent: the workers abandoned their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them. They began, I shall not say to understand, but to sense the necessity for collective resistance, and definitely abandoned their slavish submission to their superiors. But all this was more in the nature of outbursts of desperation and vengeance than of *struggle*. The strikes of the 'nineties revealed far greater flashes of consciousness: definite demands were put forward, the time to strike was carefully chosen, known cases and examples in other places were discussed, etc. While the riots were simply uprisings of the oppressed, the systematic strikes represented the class struggle in embryo, but only in embryo. Taken by themselves, these strikes were simply trade union struggles, but not yet Social-Dem-

ocratic struggles. They testified to the awakening antagonisms between workers and employers, but the workers were not and could not be conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system, *i.e.*, it was not yet Social-Democratic consciousness. In this sense, the strikes of the 'nineties, in spite of the enormous progress they represented as compared with the "riots," represented a purely spontaneous movement.

We said that *there could not yet be* Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, *i.e.*, it may itself realise the necessity for combining in unions, for fighting against the employers and for striving to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc.¹ The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. According to their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. Similarly, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the labour movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia. At the time of which we are speaking, *i.e.*, the middle of the 'nineties, this doctrine not only represented the completely formulated programme of the Emancipation of Labour group, but had already won the adherence of the majority of the revolutionary youth in Russia.

Hence, simultaneously, we had the spontaneous awakening of the masses of the workers, the awakening to conscious life and struggle, as well as the revolutionary youth, armed with the

¹ Trade unionism does not exclude "politics" altogether, as some imagine. Trade unions have always conducted political (but not Social-Democratic) agitation and struggle. We shall deal with the difference between trade union politics and Social-Democratic politics in the next chapter.

Social-Democratic theories, striving to reach the workers. In this connection it is particularly important to state the oft-forgotten (and comparatively little-known) fact that the early Social-Democrats of that period *zealously carried on economic agitation* (being guided in this by the really useful instructions contained in the pamphlet *On Agitation** that was still in manuscript), but they did not regard this as their sole task. On the contrary, *from the very outset* they brought forward the widest historical tasks of Russian Social-Democracy, and particularly the task of overthrowing the autocracy. For example, the St. Petersburg group of Social-Democrats, which formed the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, towards the end of 1895, prepared the first number of the newspaper called *Rabocheye Dyelo*. This number was completely ready for the press when it was seized by the gendarmes who, on the night of December 8, 1895, raided the house of one of the members of the group, Anatole Alekseyevich Vaneyev,¹ and so the original *Rabocheye Dyelo* was not fated to see the light. The leading article in this number (which perhaps in thirty years' time some *Russkaya Starina*² will discover in the archives of the Department of Police) described the historical tasks of the working class in Russia, of which the achievement of political liberty is regarded as the most important. This number also contained an article entitled "What Are Our Cabinet Ministers Thinking Of?" which dealt with the breaking up of the elementary education committees by the police. In addition, there was some correspondence, from St. Petersburg, as well as from other parts of Russia (for example, a letter about the assault on the workers in the Yaroslav Gubernia). This, if we are not mistaken, "first attempt" of the Russian Social-Democrats of the 'nineties was not a narrow, local, and certainly not an "economic" newspaper, but one that

¹ A. A. Vaneyev died in Eastern Siberia in 1899 from consumption, which he contracted as a result of his solitary confinement in prison. That is why we are able to publish the above information, the authenticity of which we guarantee, for it comes from persons who were closely and directly acquainted with A. A. Vaneyev.

² *Russian Antiquary*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

strove to unite the strike movement with the revolutionary movement against the autocracy, and to win all the victims of oppression and political and reactionary obscurantism over to the side of Social-Democracy. No one in the slightest degree acquainted with the state of the movement at that period could doubt that such a paper would have been fully approved of by the workers of the capital and the revolutionary intelligentsia and would have had a wide circulation. The failure of the enterprise merely showed that the Social-Democrats of that time were unable to meet the immediate requirements of the time owing to their lack of revolutionary experience and practical training. The same thing must be said with regard to the St. Petersburg *Rabochy Listok*¹ and particularly with regard to *Rabochaya Gazeta* and the *Manifesto* of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party which was established in the spring of 1898. Of course, we would not dream of blaming the Social-Democrats of that time for this unpreparedness. But in order to obtain the benefit of the experience of that movement, and to learn practical lessons from it, we must thoroughly understand the causes and significance of this or that shortcoming. For that reason it is extremely important to establish the fact that part (perhaps even a majority) of the Social-Democrats, operating in the period of 1895-98, quite justly considered it possible even then, at the very beginning of the "spontaneous movement," to come forward with a most extensive programme and fighting tactics.² The lack of

¹ *Workers' Sheet*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

² "*Iskra*, which adopts a hostile attitude towards the activities of the Social-Democrats of the end of the 'nineties, ignores the fact that at that time the conditions for any other kind of work except fighting for petty demands were absent," declare the Economists in their *Letter to Russian Social-Democratic Organs*. (*Iskra*, No. 12.) The facts quoted above show that the statement about "absent conditions" is the very opposite of the truth. Not only at the end, but even in the middle of the 'nineties, all the conditions existed for other work, besides fighting for petty demands, all the conditions—except sufficient training of the leaders. Instead of frankly admitting our, the ideologists', the leaders', lack of sufficient training—the Economists try to throw the blame entirely upon the "absent conditions," upon the influence of material environment which determines the road from which it will be impossible for any

training of the majority of the revolutionaries, being quite a natural phenomenon, could not have aroused any particular fears. Since the tasks were properly defined, since the energy existed for repeated attempts to fulfil these tasks, the temporary failures were not such a great misfortune. Revolutionary experience and organisational skill are things that can be acquired provided the desire is there to acquire these qualities, provided the shortcomings are recognised—which in revolutionary activity is more than halfway towards removing them!

It was a great misfortune, however, when this consciousness began to grow dim (it was very active among the workers of the group mentioned), when people appeared—and even Social-Democratic organs—who were prepared to regard shortcomings as virtues, who even tried to invent a *theoretical* basis for *slavish cringing before spontaneity*. It is time to summarise this tendency, the substance of which is incorrectly and too narrowly described as “Economism.”

B. BOWING TO SPONTANEITY

Rabochaya Mysl

Before dealing with the literary manifestation of this subservience, we should like to mention the following characteristic fact (communicated to us from the above-mentioned source), which throws some light on the circumstances in which the two future conflicting tendencies in Russian Social-Democracy arose and grew among the comrades working in St. Petersburg. In the beginning of 1897, prior to their banishment, A. A. Vaneyev and several of his comrades attended a private meeting at which the “old” and “young” members of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class were gathered. The conversation centred chiefly around the question of organisation, and particularly around the “rules for a workers’ benefit fund,” which, in their final form, were published in *Listok Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 46.* Sharp differences were immediately re-

ideologist to divert the movement. What is this but slavish cringing before spontaneity, the fact that the “ideologists” are enamoured of their own shortcomings?

vealed between the "old" members (the "Decembrists," as the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats jestingly called them¹) and several of the "young" members (who subsequently took an active part in the work of *Rabochaya Mysl*), and a very heated discussion ensued. The "young" members defended the main principles of the rules in the form in which they were published. The "old" members said that this was not what was wanted, that first of all it was necessary to consolidate the League of Struggle into an organisation of revolutionaries which should have control of all the various workers' benefit funds, students' propaganda circles, etc. It goes without saying that the controversialists had no suspicion at that time that these disagreements were the beginning of a divergence; on the contrary they regarded them as being of an isolated and casual nature. But this fact shows that "Economism" did not arise and spread in Russia without a fight on the part of the "old" Social-Democrats (the Economists of today are apt to forget this). And if, in the main, this struggle has not left "documentary" traces behind it, it is *solely* because the membership of the circles working at that time underwent such constant change that no continuity was established and, consequently, differences were not recorded in any documents.

The appearance of *Rabochaya Mysl* brought Economism to the light of day, but not all at once. We must picture to ourselves concretely the conditions of the work and the short-lived character of the majority of the Russian circles (and only those who have experienced this can have any exact idea of it), in order to understand how much there was accidental in the successes and failures of the new tendency in various towns, and why for a long time neither the advocates nor the opponents of this "new" tendency could make up their minds—indeed they had no opportunity to do so—as to whether this was really a new tendency or whether it was merely an expression of the lack of training of certain individuals. For example, the first mimeographed copies of *Rabochaya Mysl* never reached the great

¹ Because they, including Lenin, were arrested in December 1895.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

majority of Social-Democrats, and we are able to refer to the leading article in the first number only because it was reproduced in an article by V. I. (*Listok Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 47 *et sup.*), who, of course, did not fail zealously but unreasonably to extol the new paper, which was so different from the papers and the schemes for papers mentioned above.¹ And this leading article deserves to be dealt with in detail because it so strongly expresses *the spirit of Rabochaya Mysl* and Economism generally.

After referring to the fact that the arm of the "blue-coats" could never stop the progress of the labour movement, the leading article goes on to say: "... The virility of the labour movement is due to the fact that the workers themselves are at last taking their fate into their own hands, and out of the hands of the leaders," and this fundamental thesis is then developed in greater detail. As a matter of fact the leaders (*i.e.*, the Social-Democrats, the organisers of the League of Struggle) were, one might say, torn out of the hands of the workers by the police²; yet it is made to appear that the workers were fighting against the leaders, and eventually liberated themselves from their yoke! Instead of calling upon the workers to go forward towards the consolidation of the revolutionary organisation and to the expansion of political activity, they began to call for a *retreat* to the purely trade union struggle. They announced that "the economic basis of the movement is eclipsed by the effort never to forget the political idea," and that the watchword for the movement was "Fight for an economic position" (!) or, what is still better, "The workers for the workers." It was de-

¹ It should be stated in passing that the praise of *Rabochaya Mysl* in November 1898, when Economism had become fully defined, especially abroad, emanated from that same V. I., who very soon after became one of the editors of *Rabocheye Dyelo*. And yet *Rabocheye Dyelo* denied that there were two tendencies in Russian Social-Democracy, and continues to deny it to this day. [V. I. are the initials of V. Ivanshin.—*Ed.*]

² That this simile is a correct one is shown by the following characteristic fact. When, after the arrest of the "Decembrists," the news was spread among the workers on the Schlüsselburg Road that the discovery and arrest were facilitated by an *agent-provocateur*, N. M. Mikhailov, a dental surgeon, who had been in contact with a group associated with the "Decembrists," they were so enraged that they decided to kill him,

clared that strike funds "are more valuable for the movement than a hundred other organisations." (Compare this statement made in October 1897 with the controversy between the "Decembrists" and the young members in the beginning of 1897.) Catchwords like: "We must concentrate, not on the 'cream' of the workers, but on the 'average' worker—the mass worker"; "Politics always obediently follow economics,"¹ etc., etc., became the fashion, and exercised irresistible influence upon the masses of the youth who were attracted to the movement, but who, in the majority of cases, were acquainted only with legally expounded fragments of Marxism.

Consciousness was completely overwhelmed by spontaneity—the spontaneity of the "Social-Democrats" who repeated V. V.'s "ideas," the spontaneity of those workers who were carried away by the arguments that a kopek added to a ruble was worth more than socialism and politics, and that they must "fight, knowing that they are fighting not for some future generation, but for themselves and their children." (Leading article in *Rabochaya Mysl*, No. 1.) Phrases like these have always been the favourite weapons of the West European bourgeoisie, who, while hating socialism, strove (like the German "Sozial-Politiker" Hirsch) to transplant English trade unionism to their own soil and to preach to the workers that the purely trade union struggle is the struggle for themselves and for their children, and not the struggle for some kind of socialism for some future generation.² And now the "V.V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy" repeat these bourgeois phrases. It is important at this point to note three circumstances, which will be useful to us in our further analysis of *contemporary* differences.³

¹ These quotations are taken from the leading article in the first number of *Rabochaya Mysl* already referred to. One can judge from this the degree of theoretical training possessed by these "V. V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy," who kept repeating the crude vulgarisation of "economic materialism" at a time when the Marxists were carrying on a literary war against the real V. V., who had long ago been dubbed "a past master of reactionary deeds," for holding *similar* views on the relation between politics and economics!

² The Germans even have a special expression: *Nur Gewerkschaftler*, which means an advocate of the "pure and simple" trade union struggle.

³ We emphasise the word *contemporary* for the benefit of those who

First of all, the overwhelming of consciousness by spontaneity, to which we referred above, also took place *spontaneously*. This may sound like a pun, but, alas, it is the bitter truth. It did not take place as a result of an open struggle between two diametrically opposed points of view, in which one gained the victory over the other; it occurred because an increasing number of "old" revolutionaries were "torn away" by the gendarmes and because increasing numbers of "young" "V.V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy" came upon the scene. Everyone, who I shall not say has participated in the *contemporary* Russian movement, but who has at least breathed its atmosphere, knows perfectly well that this was so. And the reason why we, nevertheless, strongly urge the reader to ponder over this universally known fact, and why we quote the facts, as an illustration, so to speak, about *Rabocheye Dyelo* as it first appeared, and about the controversy between the "old" and the "young" at the beginning of 1897—is that certain persons are speculating on the public's (or the very youthful youth's) ignorance of these facts, and are boasting of their "democracy." We shall return to this point further on.

Secondly, in the very first literary manifestation of Economism, we observe the extremely curious and highly characteristic phenomenon—for understanding the differences prevailing among contemporary Social-Democrats—that the adherents of the "pure and simple" labour movement, the worshippers of the closest "organic" (the term used by *Rabocheye Dyelo*) contacts with the proletarian struggle, the opponents of the non-labour intelligentsia (notwithstanding that it is a socialist intelligentsia) are compelled, in order to defend their positions, to resort to the arguments of the *bourgeois* "pure and simple" trade unionists. This shows that from the very outset, *Rabochaya Mysl* began unconsciously to carry out the programme of the *Credo*. This shows (what the *Rabocheye Dyelo* cannot may pharisaically shrug their shoulders and say: it is easy enough to attack *Rabochaya Mysl* now, but is not all this ancient history? *Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur* [change the name and the tale refers to you—*Ed.*], we reply to such contemporary pharisees whose complete mental subjection to *Rabochaya Mysl* will be proved further on.

understand) that all subservience to the spontaneity of the labour movement, all belittling of the role of "the conscious element," of the role of Social-Democracy, *means, whether one likes it or not, the growth of influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers.* All those who talk about "exaggerating the importance of ideology,"¹ about exaggerating the role of the conscious elements,² etc., imagine that the pure and simple labour movement can work out an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers "take their fate out of the hands of the leaders." But this is a profound mistake. To supplement what has been said above, we shall quote the following profoundly true and important utterances by Karl Kautsky on the new draft programme of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party³:

"Many of our revisionist critics believe that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle create not only the conditions for socialist production, but also, and directly, the *consciousness* [K.K.'s italics] of its necessity. And these critics advance the argument that the most highly capitalistically developed country, England, is more remote than any other from this consciousness. Judging from the draft, one might assume that the committee which drafted the Austrian programme shared this alleged orthodox-Marxian view which is thus refuted. In the draft programme it is stated: 'The more capitalist development increases the numbers of the proletariat, the more the proletariat is compelled and becomes fit to fight against capitalism. The proletariat becomes conscious of the possibility of and necessity for socialism,' etc. In this connection socialist consciousness is represented as a necessary and direct result of the proletarian class struggle. But this is absolutely untrue. Of course, socialism, as a theory, has its roots in modern economic relationships just as the class struggle of the proletariat has, and just as the latter emerges from the struggle against the capitalist-created poverty and misery of the masses. But socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicles of science are not the proletariat, but the *bourgeois intelligentsia* [K. K.'s italics]: it was in the minds of some members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they

¹ Letter of the Economists, in *Iskra*, No. 12.

² *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10.

³ *Neue Zeit*, 1901-02, XX, I, No. 3, p. 79. The committee's draft to which Kautsky refers was passed by the Vienna Congress at the end of last year in a slightly amended form.

who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduced it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without (*von Aussen Hineingetragenes*), and not something that arose within it spontaneously (*urwüchsig*). Accordingly, the old Hainfeld programme quite rightly stated that the task of Social-Democracy is to imbue the proletariat with the *consciousness* of its position and the consciousness of its tasks. There would be no need for this if consciousness emerged of itself from the class struggle. The new draft copied this proposition from the old programme, and attached it to the proposition mentioned above. But this completely broke the line of thought. . . ."

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers in the process of their movement¹ *the only choice is*: either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle socialist ideology *in any way*, to *deviate from it in the slightest degree* means strengthening bourgeois ideology. There is a lot of talk about spontaneity, but the *spontaneous* development of the labour movement leads to its becoming subordinated to bourgeois ideology, leads to its developing *according to the programme* of the *Credo*, for the spontaneous labour movement is pure and simple trade unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei*, and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers to the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is to *combat spontaneity*,

¹This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. But they take part not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, like Proudhon and Weitling; in other words, they take part only to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and advance that knowledge. And in order that workingmen *may be able to do this more often*, efforts must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers generally; care must be taken that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of "*literature for workers*" but that they study *general literature* to an increasing degree. It would be even more true to say "are not confined," instead of "do not confine themselves," because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia and it is only a few (bad) intellectuals who believe that it is sufficient "for the workers," to tell them a few things about factory conditions, and to repeat over and over again what has long been known.

to *divert* the labour movement from its spontaneous, trade unionist striving to go under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy. The phrases employed by the authors of the "economic" letter in *Iskra*, No. 12, about the efforts of the most inspired ideologists not being able to divert the labour movement from the path that is determined by the interaction of the material elements and the material environment, *are tantamount to the abandonment of socialism*, and if only the authors of this letter fearlessly thought out what they say to its logical conclusion, as everyone who enters the arena of literary and public activity should do, they would have nothing to do but "fold their useless arms over their empty breasts" and . . . leave the field of action to the Struves and Prokopoviches who are dragging the labour movement "along the line of least resistance," *i.e.*, along the line of bourgeois trade unionism, or to the Zubatovs who are dragging it along the line of clerical and gendarme "ideology."

Recall the example of Germany. What was the historical service Lassalle rendered to the German labour movement? It was that he *diverted* that movement from the path of trade unionism and co-operation preached by the Progressives along which it had been travelling spontaneously (*with the benign assistance of Schulze-Delitzsche and those like him*). To fulfill a task like that it was necessary to do something altogether different from indulging in talk about belittling the spontaneous element, about the tactics-process and about the interaction between elements and environment, etc. *A desperate struggle against spontaneity had to be carried on*, and only after such a struggle, extending over many years, was it possible to convert the working population of Berlin from a bulwark of the Progressive Party into one of the finest strongholds of Social-Democracy. This fight is not finished even now (as those who learn the history of the German movement from Prokopovich, and its philosophy from Struve, believe). Even now the German working class is, so to speak, broken up into a number of ideologies. A section of the workers is organised in Catholic and monarchist labour unions; another section is organised in the Hirsch-Duncker

unions,* founded by the bourgeois worshippers of English trade unionism, while a third section is organised in Social-Democratic trade unions. The latter is immeasurably more numerous than the rest, but Social-Democracy was able to achieve this superiority, and will be able to maintain it, only by unswervingly fighting against all other ideologies.

But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of least resistance, lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than Social-Democratic ideology; because it is more fully developed and because it possesses *immeasurably* more opportunities for being distributed.¹ And the younger the socialist movement is in any given country, the more vigorously must it fight against all attempts to entrench non-socialist ideology, and the more strongly must it warn the workers against those bad counsellors who shout against "exaggerating the conscious elements," etc. The authors of the economic letter, in unison with *Rabocheye Dyelo*, declaim against the intolerance that is characteristic of the infancy of the movement. To this we reply: yes, our movement is indeed in its infancy, and in order that it may grow up the more quickly, it must become infected with intolerance against all those who retard its growth by subservience to spontaneity. Nothing is so ridiculous and harmful as pretending that we are "old hands" who have long ago experienced all the decisive episodes of the struggle!

Thirdly, the first number of *Rabochaya Mysl* shows that the term "Economism" (which, of course, we do not propose to

¹ It is often said: the working class *spontaneously* gravitates towards socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory defines the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory, and for that reason the workers are able to appreciate it so easily, *provided*, however, that this theory does not step aside for spontaneity and *provided* it subordinates spontaneity to itself. Usually this is taken for granted, but *Rabocheye Dyelo* forgets or distorts this obvious thing. The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism, but the more widespread (and continuously revived in the most diverse forms) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class still more.

abandon because this nickname has more or less established itself) does not adequately convey the real character of the new tendency. *Rabochaya Mysl* does not altogether repudiate the political struggle: the rules for a workers' benefit fund published in *Rabochaya Mysl*, No. 1, contains a reference to fighting against the government.* *Rabochaya Mysl* believes, however, that "politics always obediently follow economics" (and *Rabocheye Dyelo* gives a variation of this thesis when, in its programme, it asserts that "in Russia more than in any other country, the economic struggle is *inseparable* from the political struggle"). If by politics is meant *Social-Democratic* politics, then the postulates advanced by *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo* are absolutely wrong. The economic struggle of the workers is very often connected (although not inseparably) with bourgeois politics, clerical politics, etc., as we have already seen. If by politics is meant trade union politics, *i.e.*, the common striving of all workers to secure from the government measures for the alleviation of the distress characteristic of their position, but which do not abolish that position, *i.e.*, which do not remove the subjection of labour to capital, then *Rabocheye Dyelo's* postulate is correct. That striving indeed is common to the British trade unionists, who are hostile to socialism, to the Catholic workers, to the "Zubatov" workers, etc. There are politics and politics. Thus, we see that *Rabochaya Mysl* does not so much deny the political struggle as bow to its *spontaneity*, to its lack of consciousness. While fully recognising the political struggle (it would be more correct to say the political desires and demands of the workers), which arises spontaneously from the labour movement itself, it absolutely refuses *independently to work out* a specifically *Social-Democratic policy* corresponding to the general tasks of socialism and to contemporary conditions in Russia. Further on we shall show that *Rabocheye Dyelo* commits the same error.

C. THE SELF-EMANCIPATION GROUP AND "RABOCHEYE DYELO"

We have dealt at such length with the little-known and now almost forgotten leading article in the first number of *Raboch-*

aya Mysl because it was the first and most striking expression of that general stream of thought which afterwards emerged into the light of day in innumerable streamlets. V. I. was absolutely right when, in praising the first number and the leading article of *Rabochaya Mysl*, he said that it was written in a "sharp and provocative" style. (*Listok Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 49.) Every man with convictions who thinks he has something new to say writes "provocatively" and expresses his views strongly. Only those who are accustomed to sitting between two stools lack "provocativeness"; only such people are able to praise the provocativeness of *Rabochaya Mysl* one day, and attack the "provocative polemics" of its opponents the next.

We shall not dwell on the Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl* (further on we shall have occasion, on a number of points, to refer to this work, which expresses the ideas of the Economists more consistently than any other) but shall briefly mention the *Manifesto of the Self-Emancipation of the Workers Group*. (March 1899, reprinted in the *London Nakanunye*,¹ No. 7, June 1899.) The authors of this manifesto quite rightly say that "the workers of Russia are only just awakening, are only just looking around, and instinctively clutch at the first means of struggle that come to their hands." But from this correct observation, they draw the same incorrect conclusion that is drawn by *Rabochaya Mysl*, forgetting that instinct is that unconsciousness (spontaneity) to the aid of which Socialists must come; that the "first means of struggle that come to their hands" will always be, in modern society, the trade union means of struggle, and the "first" ideology "that comes to hand" will be bourgeois (trade union) ideology. Similarly, these authors do not "repudiate" politics, they merely say (merely!), repeating what was said by V. V., that politics is the superstructure, and therefore, "political agitation must be the superstructure to the agitation carried on in favour of the economic struggle; it must arise on the basis of this struggle and follow behind it."

As for *Rabocheye Dyelo*, it commenced its activity by "a defence" of the Economists. It uttered a downright falsehood in its

¹ *On the Eve*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

very first number (No. 1, pp. 141-42) when it stated that "we do not know which young comrades Axelrod referred to" in his well-known pamphlet, in which he uttered a warning to the Economists.¹ In the controversy that flared up with Axelrod and Plekhanov over this falsehood, *Rabocheye Dyelo* was compelled to admit that "by expressing ignorance, it desired to *defend* all the younger Social-Democrats abroad from this unjust accusation" (Axelrod accused the Economists of having a limited outlook). As a matter of fact this accusation was absolutely just, and *Rabocheye Dyelo* knows perfectly well that, among others, it applied to V. I., a member of its editorial staff. We shall observe in passing that in this controversy Axelrod was absolutely right and *Rabocheye Dyelo* was absolutely wrong in their respective interpretations of my pamphlet *The Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats*.² That pamphlet was written in 1897, before the appearance of *Rabochaya Mysl* when I thought, and rightly thought, that the *original* tendency of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, which I describe above, was the predominant one. At all events, that tendency was the predominant one until the middle of 1898. Consequently, in its attempt to refute the existence and dangers of Economism, *Rabocheye Dyelo* had no right whatever to refer to a pamphlet which expressed views that were *squeezed out* by Economist views in St. Petersburg in 1897-98.

But *Rabocheye Dyelo* not only "defended" the Economists—it itself constantly fell into fundamental Economist errors. The cause of these errors is to be found in the ambiguity of the interpretation given to the following thesis in *Rabocheye Dyelo's* programme: "We consider that the most important phenomenon of Russian life, the one that will mostly *determine the tasks* [our italics] and the character of the literary activity of the 'League,' is the *mass labour movement* [*Rabocheye Dyelo's* italics] that has arisen in recent years." That the mass movement is a most important phenomenon is a fact about which there can

¹ *The Contemporary Tasks and Tactics of the Russian Social-Democrats*, Geneva, 1898. Two letters written to *Rabochaya Gazeta* in 1897.

² *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 495-515.—Ed. Eng. ed.

be no dispute. But the crux of the question is, what is the meaning of the phrase: the labour movement will "determine the tasks"? It may be interpreted in one of two ways. *Either* it means subservience to the spontaneity of this movement, *i.e.*, reducing the role of Social-Democracy to mere subservience to the labour movement as such (the interpretation given to it by *Rabochaya Mysl*, the Self-Emancipation group and other Economists); *or* it may mean that the mass movement puts before us *new*, theoretical, political and organisational tasks, far more complicated than those that might have satisfied us in the period before the rise of the mass movement. *Rabocheye Dyelo* inclined and still inclines towards the first interpretation, for it said nothing definitely about new tasks, but argued all the time as if the "mass movement" *relieved* us of the necessity of clearly appreciating and fulfilling the tasks it sets before us. We need only point out that *Rabocheye Dyelo* considered that it was impossible to put the overthrow of the autocracy as the *first* task of the mass labour movement, and that it degraded this task (ostensibly in the interests of the mass movement) to the struggle for immediate political demands. (*Reply*, p. 25.)

We shall pass over the article by B. Krichevsky, the editor of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, entitled "The Economic and Political Struggle in the Russian Movement," published in No. 7 of that paper, in which these very mistakes¹ are repeated, and take up *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10.

¹The "stages theory," or the theory of "timid zigzags" in the political struggle, is expressed in this article approximately in the following way: "Political demands, which in their character are common to the whole of Russia, should, however, at first [this was written in August 1900!] correspond to the experience gained by the given stratum [*sic!*] of workers in the economic struggle. Only [!] on the basis of this experience can and should political agitation be taken up," etc. (P. 11.) On page 4, the author, protesting against what he regards as the absolutely unfounded charge of Economist heresy, pathetically exclaims: "What Social-Democrat does not know that according to the theories of Marx and Engels the economic interests of various classes are the decisive factors in history, and, *consequently*, that the proletariat's struggle for the defence of its economic interests must be of first-rate importance in its class development and struggle for emancipation?" (Our italics.) The word "consequently" is absolutely out of place. The fact that economic interests are a decisive factor *does not in the least imply* that the economic (*i.e.*,

We shall not, of course, enter in detail into the various objections raised by B. Krichevsky and Martynov against *Zarya* and *Iskra*. What interests us here solely is the theoretical position taken up by *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10. For example, we shall not examine the literary curiosity—that *Rabocheye Dyelo* saw a “diametrical” contradiction between the proposition:

“Social-Democracy does not tie its hands, it does not restrict its activities to some preconceived plan or method of political struggle; it recognises all methods of struggle, as long as they correspond to the forces at the disposal of the Party. . . .” (*Iskra*, No. 1-2.¹)

and the proposition:

. . . “without a strong organisation, tested in the political struggle carried on under all circumstances and in all periods, there can be no talk of a systematic plan of activity, enlightened by firm principles and unswervingly carried out, which alone is worthy of being called tactics. (*Iskra*, No. 4.²)

To confuse the recognition, *in principle*, of all means of struggle, of all plans and methods, as long as they are expedient—with the necessity *at a given political moment* for being guided by a strictly adhered-to plan, if we are to talk of tactics, is tantamount to confusing the recognition by medical science of all kinds of treatment of diseases with the necessity for adopting a certain definite method of treatment for a given disease. The point is, however, that *Rabocheye Dyelo*, while suffering from a disease which we have called subservience to spontaneity, refuses to recognise any “method of treatment” for *that* disease. Hence, it made the remarkable discovery that “a tactics plan con-

trade union) struggle must be the main factor, for the essential and “decisive” interests of classes can be satisfied *only* by radical *political* changes in general. In particular the fundamental economic interests of the proletariat can be satisfied only by a political revolution that will substitute the dictatorship of the proletariat for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. B. Krichevsky repeats the arguments of the “V.V.’s of Russian Social-Democracy” (*i.e.*, politics follow economics, etc.) and the Bernsteinists of German Social-Democracy (for example, by arguments like these, Woltmann tried to prove that the workers must first of all acquire “economic power” before they can think about political revolution).

¹ See article “The Urgent Tasks of our Movement,” in this volume, p. 14.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² See article “Where to Begin?” in this volume, p. 16.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

tradicts the fundamental spirit of Marxism" (No. 10, p. 18), that tactics are "*a process of growth of Party tasks, which grow with the Party.*" (P. 11, *Rabocheye Dyelo's* italics.) The latter remark has every chance of becoming a celebrated maxim, a permanent monument to the tendency of *Rabocheye Dyelo*. To the question: *whither?* a leading organ replies: the movement is a process of alteration in the distance between starting point and destination of the movement. This matchless example of profundity is not merely a literary curiosity (if it were, it would not be worth dealing with at length), but *the programme of the whole tendency, i.e., the programme which R. M. (in the Special Supplement to Rabochaya Mysl) expressed in the words: "That struggle is desirable which is possible, and the struggle which is possible is the one that is going on at the given moment."* It is the tendency of unbounded opportunism, which passively adapts itself to spontaneity.

"A tactics plan contradicts the fundamental spirit of Marxism"! But this is a libel on Marxism; it is like the caricature of it that was presented to us by the Narodniki in their fight against us. It means putting restraint on the initiative and energy of class conscious fighters, whereas Marxism, on the contrary, gives a gigantic impetus to the initiative and energy of Social-Democrats, opens up for them the widest perspectives and, if one may so express it, places at their disposal the mighty force of millions and millions of workers "spontaneously" rising for the struggle. The whole history of international Social-Democracy seethes with plans advanced first by one and then by another political leader; some confirming the far-sightedness and correct political and organisational insight of their authors and others revealing their short-sightedness and lack of political judgment. At the time when Germany was at one of the most important turning points in its history, the time of the establishment of the Empire, the opening of the Reichstag and the granting of universal suffrage,* Liebknecht had one plan for Social-Democratic policy and work and Schweitzer had another. When the Anti-Socialist Law came down on the heads of the German Socialists, Most and Hasselmann had one plan, that

is, to call for violence and terror; Höchberg, Schramm and (partly) Bernstein had another, which they began to preach to the Social-Democrats, somewhat as follows: they themselves had provoked the passing of the Anti-Socialist Law by being unreasonably bitter and revolutionary, and must now show that they deserve pardon by exemplary conduct. There was yet a third plan proposed by those who paved the way for and carried out the publication of an illegal organ. It is easy, of course, in retrospect, many years after the fight over the selection of the path to be followed has ended, and after history has pronounced its verdict as to the expediency of the path selected, to utter profound maxims about the growth of Party tasks that grow with the Party. But at a time of confusion,¹ when the Russian "critics" and Economists degrade Social-Democracy to the level of trade unionism, and when the terrorists are strongly advocating the adoption of a "tactics plan" that repeats the old mistakes, at such a time, to confine oneself to such profundities, means simply issuing oneself a "certificate of mental poverty." At a time when many Russian Social-Democrats suffer from lack of initiative and energy, from a lack of "scope of political propaganda, agitation and organisation,"² a lack of "plans" for a broader organisation of revolutionary work, at such a time, to say: "a tactics plan contradicts the fundamental spirit of Marxism," not only means theoretically vulgarising Marxism, but also practically *dragging the Party backward*. *Rabocheye Dyelo* goes on sermonising:

"The revolutionary Social-Democrat is only confronted by the task of accelerating objective development by his conscious work: it is not his task to obviate it or substitute his own subjective plans for this development. *Iskra* knows all this in theory. But the enormous importance which Marxism quite justly attaches to conscious revolutionary work causes it in practice, owing to its doctrinaire view of tactics, to *belittle the significance of the objective or the spontaneous element of development*." (P. 18.)

¹ *Ein Jahr der Verwirrung* [*A Year of Confusion*] is the title Mehring gave to the chapter of his *History of German Social-Democracy* in which he describes the hesitancy and lack of determination displayed at first by the Socialists in selecting the "tactics plan" for the new situation.

² Leading article in *Iskra*, No. 1, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement," see p. 12 in this volume,—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

Another example of the extraordinary theoretical confusion worthy of V. V. and that fraternity. We would ask our philosopher: how may a deviser of subjective plans "belittle" objective development? Obviously by losing sight of the fact that this objective development creates or strengthens, destroys or weakens certain classes, strata, groups, nations, groups of nations, etc., and in this way creates a definite international political grouping of forces, determining the position of revolutionary parties, etc. If the deviser of plans did that, his mistake would not be that he belittled the spontaneous element, but that he belittled the *conscious element*, for he would then show that he lacked the "consciousness" that would enable him properly to understand objective development. Hence, the very talk about "estimating the *relative* significance" (*Rabocheye Dyelo's* italics) of spontaneity and consciousness sufficiently reveals a complete lack of "consciousness." If certain "spontaneous elements of development" can be grasped at all by human understanding, then an incorrect estimation of them would be tantamount to "belittling the conscious element." But if they cannot be grasped, then we cannot be aware of them, and therefore cannot speak of them. What is B. Krichevsky arguing about then? If he thinks that *Iskra's* "subjective plans" are erroneous (as he in fact declares them to be), then he ought to show what objective facts are ignored in these plans, and then charge *Iskra* with *a lack of consciousness* for ignoring them, with, to use his own words, "belittling the conscious element." If, however, while being displeased with subjective plans he can bring forward no other argument than that of "belittling the spontaneous element" (!!) he merely shows: 1) that he theoretically understands Marxism *à la* Kareyevs and Mikhailovskys, who have been sufficiently ridiculed by Beltov, and 2) that, practically, he is quite pleased with the "spontaneous elements of development" that have drawn our "legal Marxists" towards Bernsteinism and our Social-Democrats towards Economism, and that he is full of wrath against those who have determined at all costs to *divert* Russian Social-Democracy from the path of spontaneous development.

Rabocheye Dyelo accuses *Iskra* and *Zarya* of "setting up their programme against the movement, like a spirit hovering over the formless chaos." (P. 29.) But what else is the function of Social-Democracy if not to be a "spirit," not only hovering over the spontaneous movement, but also *raising* the movement *to the level of "its programme"*? Surely, it is not its function to drag at the *tail* of the movement: at best, this would be of no service to the movement; at the worst, it would be very, very harmful. *Rabocheye Dyelo*, however, not only follows this "tactics-process," but elevates it to a principle, so that it would be more correct to describe its tendency not as opportunism, but as *khvostism* (from the word *khvost*¹). And it must be admitted that those who have determined always to follow behind the movement like a tail are absolutely and forever ensured against "belittling the spontaneous element of development."

* * *

And so, we have become convinced that the fundamental error committed by the "new tendency" in Russian Social-Democracy lies in its subservience to spontaneity, and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a mass of consciousness from us Social-Democrats. The greater the spontaneous uprising of the masses, the more widespread the movement becomes, so much the more rapidly grows the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organisational work of Social-Democracy.

The spontaneous rise of the masses in Russia proceeded (and continues) with such rapidity that the young untrained Social-Democrats proved unfitted for the gigantic tasks that confronted them. This lack of training is our common misfortune, the misfortune of *all* Russian Social-Democrats. The rise of the masses proceeded and spread uninterruptedly and continuously; it not only continued in the places it commenced in, but it spread to new localities and to new strata of the population (influenced by the labour movement, the ferment among the students, the intellectuals generally and even among the peasantry revived),

¹ *Khvost* is the Russian word for tail.—Ed. Eng. ed.

Revolutionaries, however, *lagged behind* this rise of the masses both in their "theories" and in their practical activity; they failed to establish an uninterrupted organisation having continuity with the past, and capable of *leading* the whole movement.

In chapter I, we proved that *Rabocheye Dyelo* degraded our theoretical tasks and that it "spontaneously" repeated the fashionable catchword "freedom of criticism": that those who repeated this catchword lacked the "consciousness" to understand that the positions of the opportunist "critics" and the revolutionaries, both in Germany and in Russia, are diametrically opposed to each other.

In the following chapters, we shall show how this subservience to spontaneity found expression in the sphere of the political tasks and the organisational work of Social-Democracy.

III

TRADE UNION POLITICS AND SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

WE shall start off again by praising *Rabocheye Dyelo*. Martynov gave his article in No. 10 of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, on his differences with *Iskra*, the title "Exposure Literature and the Proletarian Struggle." He formulated the substance of these differences as follows:

"We cannot confine ourselves entirely to exposing the system that stands in its [the labour party's] path of development. We must also respond to the immediate and current interests of the proletariat." "... *Iskra* ... is in fact the organ of revolutionary opposition that exposes the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs. ... We, however, work and shall continue to work for the cause of labour in close organic contact with the proletarian struggle." (P. 63.)

One cannot help being grateful to Martynov for this formula. It is of outstanding general interest because substantially it embraces not only our disagreements with *Rabocheye Dyelo*, but the general disagreement between ourselves and the Economists concerning the political struggle. We have already shown that the Economists do not altogether repudiate "politics," but that they are constantly deviating from the Social-Democratic conception of politics to the trade unionist conception. Martynov deviates in exactly the same way, and we agree, therefore, to take his views as an *example* of Economist error on this question. As we shall endeavour to prove, neither the authors of the Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl*, nor the authors of the manifesto issued by the Self-Emancipation group, nor the authors of the economic letter published in *Iskra*, No. 12, will have any right to complain against this choice,

A. POLITICAL AGITATION AND ITS RESTRICTION
BY THE ECONOMISTS

Everyone knows that the spread and consolidation of the economic¹ struggle of the Russian workers proceeded simultaneously with the creation of a "literature" exposing economic conditions, *i.e.*, factory and industrial conditions. These "leaflets" were devoted mainly to the exposure of factory conditions, and very soon a passion for exposures was roused among the workers. As soon as the workers realised that the Social-Democratic circles desired to and could supply them with a new kind of leaflet that told the whole truth about their poverty-stricken lives, about their excessive toil and their lack of rights, correspondence began to pour in from the factories and workshops. This "exposure literature" created a huge sensation not only in the particular factory dealt with, the conditions of which were exposed in a given leaflet, but in all the factories to which news had spread about the facts exposed. And as the poverty and want among the workers in the various enterprises and in the various trades are pretty much the same, the "truth about the life of the workers" roused the admiration of *all*. Even among the most backward workers, a veritable passion was roused to "go into print"—a noble passion for this rudimentary form of war against the whole of the modern social system which is based upon robbery and oppression. And in the overwhelming majority of cases these "leaflets" were in truth a declaration of war, because the exposures had a terrifically rousing effect upon the workers; it stimulated them to put forward demands for the removal of the most glaring evils and roused in them a readiness to support these demands with strikes. Finally, the employers themselves were compelled to recognise the significance of these leaflets as a declaration of war, so much so that in a large number of cases they did not even wait for the outbreak

¹In order to avoid misunderstanding we would state that here and throughout this pamphlet, by economic struggle, we mean (in accordance with the meaning of the term as it has become accepted among us) the "practical economic struggle" which Engels, in the passage quoted above, described as "resistance to capitalism," and which in free countries is known as the trade union struggle,

of hostilities. As is always the case, the mere publication of these exposures made them effective, and they acquired the significance of a strong moral force. On more than one occasion, the mere appearance of a leaflet proved sufficient to secure the satisfaction of all or part of the demands put forward. In a word, economic (factory) exposures have been and are an important lever in the economic struggle and they will continue to be such as long as capitalism, which creates the need for the workers to defend themselves, exists. Even in the more advanced countries of Europe today, the exposure of the evils in some backward trade, or in some forgotten branch of domestic industry, serves as a starting point for the awakening of class consciousness, for the beginning of a trade union struggle, and for the spread of socialism.¹

Recently, the overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats were almost wholly engaged in this work of organising the exposure of factory conditions. It is sufficient to refer to the columns of *Rabochaya Mysl* to judge to what extent they were engaged in it. So much so, indeed, that they lost sight of the fact that this, *taken by itself*, is not in essence Social-Democratic work, but merely trade union work. As a matter of fact, these exposures merely dealt with the relations between the workers *in a given trade* and their immediate employers,

¹ In the present chapter, we deal only with the *political* struggle, whether it is to be understood in its broader or narrower sense. Therefore, we refer only in passing, merely to point out a curiosity, to the accusation that *Rabocheye Dyelo* hurls against *Iskra* of being "too restrained" in regard to the economic struggle. (*Two Congresses*, p. 27, rehashed by Martynov in his pamphlet *Social-Democracy and the Working Class*.) If those who make this accusation counted up in terms of hundredweights or reams, as they are so fond of doing, what has been said about the economic struggle in the industrial column of *Iskra* in one year's issue, and compared this with the industrial columns of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and *Rabochaya Mysl* taken together, they would see that they lag very much behind even in this respect. Apparently, the consciousness of this simple truth compels them to resort to arguments which clearly reveal their confusion. "*Iskra*," they write, "willy-nilly [!] is compelled [!] to take note of the imperative demands of life and to publish at least [!] correspondence about the labour movement." (*Two Congresses*, p. 27.) Now this is really a crushing argument!

and all that they achieved was that the vendors of labour power learned to sell their "commodity" on better terms and to fight the purchasers of labour power over a purely commercial deal. These exposures could have served (if properly utilised by revolutionaries) as a beginning and a constituent part of Social-Democratic activity, but they could also have led (and with subservience to spontaneity inevitably had to lead) to a "pure and simple" trade union struggle and to a non-Social-Democratic labour movement. Social-Democrats lead the struggle of the working class not only for better terms for the sale of labour power, but also for the abolition of the social system which compels the propertyless to sell themselves to the rich. Social-Democracy represents the working class, not in relation to a given group of employers, but in its relation to all classes in modern society, to the state as an organised political force. Hence, it not only follows that Social-Democrats must not confine themselves entirely to the economic struggle; they must not even allow the organisation of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities. We must actively take up the political education of the working class and the development of its political consciousness. Now, after *Zarya* and *Iskra* have made the first attack upon Economism "all are agreed" on this (although some agreed only nominally, as we shall soon prove).

The question now arises: what does political education mean? Is it sufficient to confine oneself to the propaganda of working class hostility to autocracy? Of course not. It is not enough to *explain* to the workers that they are politically oppressed (no more than it was to *explain* to them that their interests were antagonistic to the interests of the employers). Advantage must be taken of every concrete example of this oppression for the purpose of agitation (in the same way that we began to use concrete examples of economic oppression for the purpose of agitation). And inasmuch as *political* oppression affects all sorts of classes in society, inasmuch as it manifests itself in various spheres of life and activity, in industrial life, civic life, in personal and family life, in religious life, scientific life, etc., etc.,

is it not evident that *we shall not be fulfilling our task* of developing the political consciousness of the workers *if we do not undertake* the organisation of the *political exposure of auto-cracy in all its aspects*? In order to carry on agitation around concrete examples of oppression, these examples must be exposed (just as it was necessary to expose factory evils in order to carry on economic agitation).

One would think that this was clear enough. It turns out, however, that "all" are agreed that it is necessary to develop political consciousness, *in all its aspects*, only in words. It turns out that *Rabocheye Dyelo*, for example, has not only failed to take up the task of organising (or to make a start in organising) all-sided political exposure, but is even trying to *drag Iskra*, which has undertaken this task, *away from it*. Listen to this: "The political struggle of the working class is merely [it is precisely not "merely"] a more developed, a wider and more effective form of economic struggle." (Programme of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, published in No. 1, p. 3.) "The Social-Democrats are now confronted with the task of, as far as possible, giving the economic struggle itself a political character." (Martynov, *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 42.) "The economic struggle is the most widely applicable method of drawing the masses into active political struggle." (Resolution passed by the Congress of the League and "amendments" thereto, *Two Congresses*, pp. 11 and 17.) As the reader will observe, all these postulates permeate *Rabocheye Dyelo*, from its very first number to the recently issued "Instructions to the Editors," and all of them evidently express a single view regarding political agitation and the political struggle. Examine this view from the standpoint of the opinion prevailing among all Economists, that political agitation must *follow* economic agitation. Is it true that, in general,¹ the

¹ We say "in general," because *Rabocheye Dyelo* speaks of general principles and of the general tasks of the whole Party. Undoubtedly, cases occur in practice, when politics *must* follow economics, but only Economists can say a thing like that in a resolution that was intended to apply to the whole of Russia. Cases do occur when it is possible "right from the beginning" to carry on political agitation "exclusively on an economic basis"; and yet *Rabocheye Dyelo* went so far as to say that "there is no need for this whatever." (*Two Congresses*, p.

economic struggle "is the most widely applicable method" of drawing the masses into the political struggle? It is absolutely untrue. *All and sundry* manifestations of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, in addition to the evils connected with the economic struggle, are equally "widely applicable" as a means of "drawing in" the masses. The tyranny of the Zemsky Nachalniki,¹ the flogging of the peasantry, the corruption of the officials, the conduct of the police towards the "common people" in the cities, the fight against the famine-stricken and the suppression of the popular striving towards enlightenment and knowledge, the extortion of taxes, the persecution of the religious sects, the harsh discipline in the army, the militarist conduct towards the students and the liberal intelligentsia—all these and a thousand other similar manifestations of tyranny, though not directly connected with the "economic" struggle, do they, in general, represent a *less* "widely applicable" method and subject for political agitation and for drawing the masses into the political struggle? The very opposite is the case. Of all the innumerable cases in which the workers suffer (either personally or those closely associated with them) from tyranny, violence and lack of rights, undoubtedly only a relatively few represent cases of police tyranny in the economic struggle as such. Why then should we, beforehand, *restrict* the scope of political agitation by declaring *only one* of the methods to be "the most widely applicable," when Social-Democrats have other, generally speaking, not less "widely applicable" means?

The League attaches significance to the fact that it replaced the phrase "most widely applicable method" by the phrase "a better method," contained in one of the resolutions of the Fourth Congress of the Jewish Labour League (Bund).^{*} We confess that we find it difficult to say which of these resolutions

11.) In the next chapter, we shall show that the tactics of the "politicians" and revolutionaries not only do not ignore the trade union tasks of Social-Democracy, but that, on the contrary, they alone *can secure* the consistent fulfilment of these tasks.

¹ Officials, usually members of the nobility, who exercised administrative and judicial authority over the peasant population for the purpose of keeping them in subjection to the landlords.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

is the better one. In our opinion *both are "worse."* Both the League and the Bund fall into the error (partly, perhaps, unconsciously, owing to the influence of tradition) of giving an economic, trade unionist interpretation to politics. The fact that this error is expressed either by the word "better" or by the words "most widely applicable" makes no material difference whatever. If the League had said that "political agitation on an economic basis" is the most widely applied (and not "applicable") method it would have been right in regard to a certain period in the development of our Social-Democratic movement. It would have been right in regard to the *Economists* and to many (if not the majority) of the practical workers of 1898-1901 who *applied* the method of political agitation (to the extent that they applied it at all) *almost exclusively on an economic basis*. Political agitation on *such* lines was recognised and, as we have seen, even recommended by *Rabochaya Mysl* and by the Self-Emancipation group! *Rabocheye Dyelo* should have *strongly condemned* the fact that useful economic agitation was accompanied by the harmful restriction of the political struggle, but instead of that, it declares the method most widely *applied* (by the *Economists*) to be the most widely *applicable*!

What real concrete meaning does Martynov attach to the task of "giving the economic struggle itself a political character," which he presents to Social-Democracy? The economic struggle is the collective struggle of the workers against their employers for better terms *in the sale of their labour power*, for better conditions of life and labour. This struggle is necessarily a struggle according to trade, because conditions of labour differ very much in different trades, and, consequently, the fight to *improve* these conditions can only be conducted in respect of each trade (trade unions in the western countries, temporary trade associations and leaflets in Russia, etc.). Giving "the economic struggle itself a political character" means, therefore, striving to secure satisfaction for these trade demands, the improvement of conditions of labour in each separate trade by means of "legislative and administrative measures" (as Martynov expresses it on the next page of his article, p. 43). This is exactly

what the trade unions do and always have done. Read the works of the thoroughly scientific (and "thoroughly" opportunist) Mr. and Mrs. Webb and you will find that the British trade unions long ago recognised, and have long carried out, the task of "giving the economic struggle itself a political character"; they have long been fighting for the right to strike, for the removal of all legal hindrances to the co-operative and trade union movement, for laws protecting women and children, for the improvement of conditions of labour by means of health and factory legislation, etc.

Thus, the pompous phrase "giving the economic struggle itself a political character," which sounds so "terrifically" profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving to *degrade* Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade union politics! On the pretext of rectifying *Iskra's* one-sidedness, which, it is alleged, places "the revolutionising of dogma higher than the revolutionising of life,"¹ we are presented with the *struggle for economic reform* as if it were something entirely new. As a matter of fact, the phrase "giving the economic struggle itself a political character" means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms. And Martynov himself might have come to this simple conclusion had he only pondered over the significance of his own words.

"Our Party," he says, turning his heaviest guns against *Iskra*, "could and should have presented concrete demands to the government for legislative and administrative measures against economic exploitation, for the relief of unemployment, for the relief of the famine-stricken, etc." (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, pp. 42-43.)

Concrete demands for measures—does not this mean demands for social reforms? And again we ask the impartial reader, do we slander the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists (may I be forgiven for

¹ *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 60. This is the Martynov variation of the application to the present chaotic state of our movement of the thesis: "A step forward of the real movement is more important than a dozen programmes," to which we have already referred above. As a matter of fact, this is merely a translation into Russian of the notorious Bernsteinian phrase: "The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing."

this clumsy expression!), when we declare them to be concealed Bernsteinists for advancing their thesis about the necessity of fighting for economic reforms as their point of *disagreement* with *Iskra*?

Revolutionary Social-Democracy always included, and now includes, the fight for reforms in its activities. But it utilises "economic" agitation for the purpose of presenting to the government, not only demands for all sorts of measures, but also (and primarily) the demand that it cease to be an autocratic government. Moreover, it considers it to be its duty to present this demand to the government, not on the basis of the economic struggle *alone*, but on the basis of all manifestations of public and political life. In a word, it subordinates the struggle for reforms to the revolutionary struggle for liberty and for socialism, as the part is subordinate to the whole. Martynov, however, resuscitates the theory of stages in a new form, and strives to prescribe an exclusively economic, so to speak, path of development for the political struggle. By coming out at this moment, when the revolutionary movement is on the up-grade, with an alleged special "task" of fighting for reforms, he is dragging the Party backwards and is playing into the hands of both "economic" and liberal opportunism.

To proceed. Shamefacedly hiding the struggle for reforms behind the pompous thesis "giving the economic struggle itself a political character," Martynov advanced, as if it were a special point, *exclusively economic* (in fact, *exclusively factory*) *reforms*. Why he did that, we do not know. Perhaps it was due to carelessness? But if, indeed, he had something else besides "factory" reforms in mind, then the whole of his thesis, which we have just quoted, loses all sense. Perhaps he did it because he thought it possible and probable that the government would make "concessions" only in the economic sphere? ¹ If that is what he thought, then it is a strange error. Concessions are also

¹ P. 43. "Of course, when we advise the workers to present certain economic demands to the government, we do so because in the *economic* sphere, the autocratic government is compelled to agree to make certain concessions."

possible and are made in the sphere of legislation concerning flogging, passports, land compensation payments, religious sects, the censorship, etc., etc. "Economic" concessions (or pseudo-concessions) are, of course, the cheapest and most advantageous concessions to make from the government's point of view, because by these means it hopes to win the confidence of the masses of the workers. For this very reason, we Social-Democrats *must under no circumstances* create grounds for the belief (or the misunderstanding) that we attach greater value to economic reforms, or that we regard them as being particularly important, etc. "Such demands," writes Martynov, concerning the concrete demands for legislative and administrative measures referred to above, "would not be merely a hollow sound, because, promising certain palpable results, they might be actively supported by the masses of the workers. . . ." We are not Economists, oh no! We only cringe as slavishly before the "palpableness" of concrete results as do the Bernsteins, the Prokopoviches, the Struves, the R. M.'s, and *tutti quanti*! We only wish to make it understood (with Narcissus Tuporylov¹) that all that which "does not promise palpable results" is merely a "hollow sound." We are only trying to argue as if the masses of the workers were incapable (and had not already proved their capabilities, notwithstanding those who ascribe their own philistinism to them) of actively supporting *every* protest against the autocracy even if *it promises absolutely no palpable results whatever!*

"In addition to its immediate revolutionary significance, the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government [*"economic struggle against the government"*!!] has also this significance: that it constantly brings the workers face to face with their own lack of political rights." (Martynov, p. 44.)

We quote this passage not in order to repeat what has already been said hundreds and thousands of times before, but in order to thank Martynov for this excellent new formula: "the workers' economic struggle against the employers and the

¹ The *nom de plume* adopted by J. Martov in signing a satirical poem he wrote entitled "The Hymn of the Modern Socialist," in which he ridiculed the opportunists of that time. The poem was published in *Zarya*, No. 1.—Ed.

government." What a pearl! With what inimitable talent and skill in eliminating all partial disagreements and shades of differences among Economists does this clear and concise postulate express the *quintessence* of Economism: from calling to the workers to join "in the political struggle which they carry on in the general interest, for the purpose of improving the conditions of all the workers,"¹ continuing through the theory of stages, to the resolution of the Congress on the "most widely applicable," etc. "Economic struggle against the government" is precisely trade union politics, which is very, very far from being Social-Democratic politics.

B. A TALE OF HOW MARTYNOV RENDERED PLEKHANOV MORE PROFOUND

Martynov says:

"Much water has flowed under the bridge since Plekhanov wrote this book." (*Tasks of the Socialists in the Fight Against the Famine in Russia.*) "The Social-Democrats who for a decade led the economic struggle of the working class . . . have failed as yet to lay down a broad theoretical basis for Party tactics. This question has now come to the fore, and if we should wish to lay down such a theoretical basis we would certainly have considerably to deepen the principles of tactics that Plekhanov at one time developed. . . . We would now have to define the differences between propaganda and agitation differently from the way in which Plekhanov defined it. [Martynov had just previously quoted the words of Plekhanov: "A propagandist presents many ideas to one or a few persons; an agitator presents only one or a few ideas, but he presents them to a mass of people."] By propaganda we would understand the revolutionary elucidation of the whole of the present system or partial manifestations of it, irrespective of whether it is done in a form capable of being understood by individuals or by the broad masses. By agitation, in the strict sense of the word [*sic!*], we would understand calling the masses to certain concrete actions that would facilitate the direct revolutionary intervention of the proletariat in social life."

We congratulate Russian and international Social-Democracy on Martynov's new, more strict and more profound terminology. Up to now we thought (with Plekhanov, and with all the leaders of the international labour movement) that a propagandist, dealing with, say, the question of unemployment, must explain the capitalistic nature of crises, the reasons why crises are in-

¹ *Rabochaya Mysl*, Special Supplement, p. 14.

evitable in modern society, must describe how present society must inevitably become transformed into socialist society, etc. In a word, he must present "many ideas," so many indeed that they will be understood as a whole only by a (comparatively) few persons. An agitator, however, speaking on the same subject will take as an illustration a fact that is most widely known and outstanding among his audience, say, the death from starvation of the family of an unemployed worker, the growing impoverishment, etc., and utilising this fact, which is known to all and sundry, will direct all his efforts to presenting *a single idea* to the "masses," i.e., the idea of the senseless contradiction between the increase of wealth and increase of poverty; he will strive to *rouse* discontent and indignation among the masses against this crying injustice, and leave a more complete explanation of this contradiction to the propagandist. Consequently, the propagandist operates chiefly by means of the *printed* word; the agitator operates with the *living* word. The qualities that are required of an agitator are not the same as the qualities that are required of a propagandist. Kautsky and Lafargue, for example, we call propagandists; Bebel and Guesde we call agitators. To single out a third sphere, or third function, of practical activity, and to include in this third function "calling the masses to certain concrete actions," is sheer nonsense, because the "call," as a single act, either naturally and inevitably supplements the theoretical tract, propagandist pamphlet and agitational speech, or represents a purely executive function. Take, for example, the struggle now being carried on by the German Social-Democrats against the grain duties. The theoreticians write works of research on tariff policy and "call," say, for a fight for commercial treaties and for free trade. The propagandist does the same thing in the periodical press, and the agitator does it in public speeches. At the present time, the "concrete action" of the masses takes the form of signing petitions to the Reichstag against the raising of the grain duties. The call for this action comes directly from the theoreticians, the propagandists and the agitators, and, indirectly, from those workers who carry the petition lists to the factories and to private

houses to get signatures. According to the "Martynov terminology," Kautsky and Bebel are both propagandists, while those who carry the petition lists around are agitators; is that not so?

The German example recalled to my mind the German word *Verballhornung*, which literally translated means "to Ballhorn." Johann Ballhorn, a Leipzig publisher of the sixteenth century, published a child's reader in which, as was the custom, he introduced a drawing of a cock; but this drawing, instead of portraying an ordinary cock with spurs, portrayed it without spurs and with a couple of eggs lying near it. On the cover of this reader he printed the legend "*Revised* edition by Johann Ballhorn." Since that time the Germans describe any "revision" that is really a worsening as "Ballhorning." And watching Martynov's attempts to render Plekhanov "more profound" involuntarily recalls Ballhorn to one's mind. . . .

Why did our Martynov "invent" this confusion? In order to illustrate how *Iskra* "devotes attention only to one side of the case, just as Plekhanov did a decade and a half ago," "According to *Iskra*, propagandist tasks force agitational tasks into the background, at least for the present." If we translate this last postulate from the language of Martynov into ordinary human language (because humanity has not yet managed to learn the newly invented terminology), we shall get the following: "According to *Iskra*, the tasks of political propaganda and political agitation force into the background the task of 'presenting to the government concrete demands for legislative and administrative measures' that promise certain palpable results" (or demands for social reforms, that is, if we are permitted just once again to employ the old terminology of old humanity, which has not yet grown to Martynov's level). We suggest that the reader compare this thesis with the following tirade:

"What astonishes us in these programmes [the programmes advanced by revolutionary Social-Democrats] is the constant stress that is laid upon the benefits of labour activity in parliament (non-existent in Russia) and the manner in which (thanks to their revolutionary nihilism) the importance of workers participating in the Government Advisory Committees on Factory Affairs (which do exist in Russia) . . . or at least the importance of workers participating in municipal bodies is completely ignored. . . ."

The author of this tirade expresses more straightforwardly, more clearly and frankly, the very idea which Martynov discovered himself. This author is R. M. in the Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl*. (P. 15.)

C. POLITICAL EXPOSURES AND "TRAINING IN REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY"

In advancing against *Iskra* his "theory" of "raising the activity of the masses of the workers," Martynov, as a matter of fact, displayed a striving to *diminish* this activity, because he declared the very economic struggle before which all Economists grovel to be the preferable, the most important and "the most widely applicable" means of rousing this activity, and the widest field for it. This error is such a characteristic one, precisely because it is not peculiar to Martynov alone. As a matter of fact, it is possible to "raise the activity of the masses of the workers" *only* provided this activity is *not restricted entirely* to "political agitation on an economic basis." And one of the fundamental conditions for the necessary expansion of political agitation is the organisation of *all-sided* political exposure. In *no other way* can the masses be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity except by means of such exposures. Hence, to conduct such activity is one of the most important functions of international Social-Democracy as a whole, for even the existence of political liberty does not remove the necessity for such exposures; it merely changes the sphere against which they are directed. For example, the German Party is strengthening its position and spreading its influence, thanks particularly to the untiring energy with which it is conducting a campaign of political exposure. Working class consciousness cannot be genuinely political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all cases* of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected. Moreover, that response must be a Social-Democratic response, and not one from any other point of view. The consciousness of the masses of the workers cannot be genuine class consciousness, unless the workers learn to observe from concrete, and above all

from topical, political facts and events, *every* other social class and *all* the manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes; unless they learn to apply practically the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation and the consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats; because, for its self-realisation the working class must not only have a theoretical . . . rather it would be more true to say . . . not so much a theoretical as a practical understanding, acquired through experience of political life, of the relationships between *all* the various classes of modern society. That is why the idea preached by our Economists, that the economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into the political movement, is so extremely harmful and extremely reactionary in practice. In order to become a Social-Democrat, a workingman must have a clear picture in his mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord, of the priest, of the high state official and of the peasant, of the student and of the tramp; he must know their strong and weak sides; he must understand all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum *camouflages* its selfish strivings and its real "nature"; he must understand what interests certain institutions and certain laws reflect and how they reflect them. This "clear picture" cannot be obtained from books. It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures, following hot after their occurrence, of what goes on around us at a given moment, of what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way, of the meaning of such and such events, of such and such statistics, of such and such court sentences, etc., etc., etc. These universal political exposures are an essential and *fundamental* condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.

Why is it that the Russian workers as yet display so little revolutionary activity in connection with the brutal way in which the police maltreat the people, in connection with the

persecution of the religious sects, with the flogging of the peasantry, with the outrageous censorship, with the torture of soldiers, with the persecution of the most innocent cultural enterprises, etc.? Is it because the "economic struggle" does not "stimulate" them to this, because such political activity does not "promise palpable results," because it produces little that is "positive"? No. To advance this argument, we repeat, is merely to shift the blame to the shoulders of others, to blame the masses of the workers for our own philistinism (also Bernsteinism). We must blame ourselves, our remoteness from the mass movement; we must blame ourselves for being unable as yet to organise a sufficiently wide, striking and rapid exposure of these despicable outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it), the most backward worker will understand, *or will feel*, that the students and religious sects, the muzhiks and the authors are being abused and outraged by the very same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life, and, feeling that, he himself will be filled with an irresistible desire to respond to these things and then he will organise cat-calls against the censors one day, another day he will demonstrate outside the house of the provincial governor who has brutally suppressed a peasant uprising, another day he will teach a lesson to the gendarmes in surplices who are doing the work of the Holy Inquisition, etc. As yet we have done very little, almost nothing, to *hurl* universal and fresh exposures among the masses of the workers. Many of us as yet do not appreciate the *bounden duty* that rests upon us, but spontaneously follow in the wake of the "drab every-day struggle," in the narrow confines of factory life. Under such circumstances to say that "*Iskra* displays a tendency to belittle the significance of the forward march of the drab every-day struggle in comparison with the propaganda of brilliant and complete ideas" (Martynov, p. 61)—means dragging the Party backward, defending and glorifying our unpreparedness and backwardness.

As for calling the masses to action, that will come of itself immediately energetic political agitation, live and striking exposures are set going. To catch some criminal red-handed and

immediately to brand him publicly will have far more effect than any number of "appeals"; the effect very often will be such as will make it impossible to tell exactly who it was that "appealed" to the crowd, and exactly who suggested this or that plan of demonstration, etc. Calls for action, not in the general, but in the concrete sense of the term, can be made only at the place of action; only those who themselves go into action immediately can make appeals for action. And our business as Social-Democratic publicists is to deepen, to expand and intensify political exposures and political agitation.

A word in passing about "calls to action." *The only paper* that prior to the spring events called upon the workers actively to intervene in a matter that certainly did not promise any palpable results for the workers, i.e., the drafting of the students into the army, was *Iskra*. Immediately after the publication of the order of January 11, on "drafting the 183 students into the army," *Iskra* published an article about it (in its February issue, No. 2), and before any demonstration was started openly called upon "the workers to go to the aid of the students," called upon the "people" boldly to take up the government's open challenge. We ask: how is the remarkable fact to be explained that although he talks so much about "calls to action," and even suggests "calls to action" as a special form of activity, Martynov said not a word about this call?

Our Economists, including *Rabocheye Dyelo*, were successful because they pandered to the uneducated workers. But the working class Social-Democrat, the working class revolutionary (and the number of that type is growing) will indignantly reject all this talk about fighting for demands "promising palpable results," etc., because he will understand that this is only a variation of the old song about adding a kopek to the ruble. Such a workingman will say to his counsellors of *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*: you are wasting your time, gentlemen; you are interfering with excessive zeal in a job that we can manage ourselves, and you are neglecting your own duties. It is silly of you to say that the Social-Democrats' task is to give the economic struggle itself a political character, for that is

only the beginning, it is not the main task that Social-Democrats must fulfil. All over the world, including Russia, *the police themselves often give* the economic struggle a political character, and the workers themselves are beginning to understand whom the government supports.¹ The "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government," about which you make as much fuss as if you had made a new discovery, is being carried on in all parts of Russia, even the most remote, by the workers themselves who have heard about strikes, but who have heard almost nothing about socialism. The "activity" you want to stimulate among us workers, by advancing concrete demands promising palpable results, we are already displaying and in our every-day, petty trade union work we put forward concrete demands, very often without any assistance whatever from the intellectuals. But *such* activity is not enough for us; we are not children to be fed on the sops of "economic" politics alone; we want to know everything that everybody else knows, we want to learn the details of *all* aspects of political life and to take part *actively* in every political event. In order that we may do this, the intellectuals must talk to us less of what we already know, and tell us more about what we do not know and what we can never learn from our factory and "economic" ex-

¹ The demand "to give the economic struggle itself a political character" most strikingly expresses *subservience to spontaneity* in the sphere of political activity. Very often the economic struggle *spontaneously* assumes a political character, that is to say, without the injection of the "revolutionary bacilli of the intelligentsia," without the intervention of the class conscious Social-Democrats. For example, the economic struggle of the British workers assumed a political character without the intervention of the Socialists. The tasks of the Social-Democrats, however, are not exhausted by political agitation in the economic field: their task is to *convert* trade union politics into the Social-Democratic political struggle, to *utilise* the flashes of political consciousness which gleam in the minds of the workers during their economic struggles for the purpose of *raising* them to the level of *Social-Democratic* political consciousness. The Martynovs, however, instead of raising and stimulating the spontaneously awakening political consciousness of the workers, *bow down before spontaneity* and repeat over and over again, until one is sick and tired of hearing it, that the economic struggle "stimulates" in the workers' minds thoughts about their own lack of political rights. It is unfortunate, gentlemen, that the spontaneously awakening trade union political consciousness does not "stimulate" in your minds thoughts about your **Social-Democratic tasks!**

perience, that is, you must give us political knowledge. You intellectuals can acquire this knowledge, and it is your *duty* to bring us this knowledge in a hundred and a thousand times greater measure than you have done up to now; and you must bring us this knowledge, not only in the form of arguments, pamphlets and articles which sometimes—excuse our frankness!—are very dull, but in the form of live *exposures* of what our government and our governing classes are doing at this very moment in all spheres of life. Fulfil this duty with greater zeal, and *talk less about* “*increasing the activity of the masses of the workers*”! We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open street fighting, demands that do not promise any “palpable results” whatever! You cannot “increase” our activity, because *you yourselves are not sufficiently active*. Be less subservient to spontaneity, and think more about increasing *your own* activity, gentlemen! ¹

¹To prove that this imaginary speech of a worker to an Economist is based on fact, we shall call two witnesses who undoubtedly have direct knowledge of the labour movement, and who can be least suspected of being partial towards us “doctrinaires,” for one witness is an Economist (who regards even *Rabocheye Dyelo* as a political organ!), and the other is a terrorist. The first witness is the author of a remarkably truthful and lively article entitled “The St. Petersburg Labour Movement and the Practical Tasks of Social-Democracy,” published in *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 6. He divided the workers into the following categories: 1. class conscious revolutionaries. 2. intermediate stratum; 3. the masses. Now the intermediate stratum he says “is often more interested in questions of political life than in its own immediate economic interests, the connection between which and the general social conditions it has long understood. . . .” *Rabochaya Mysl* “is sharply criticised”: “it keeps on repeating the same thing over and over again, things we have long known, read long ago.” “Nothing in the political review again!” (Pp. 30-31.) But even the third stratum, “. . . the younger and more sensitive section of the workers, less corrupted by the tavern and the church, who have hardly ever had the opportunity of reading political literature, discusses political events in a rambling way and ponders deeply over the fragmentary news it gets about the student riots, etc.” The second witness, the terrorist, writes as follows: “. . . They read over once or twice the petty details of factory life in other towns, not their own, and then they read no more. . . . ‘Awfully dull,’ they say. . . . To say nothing in a workers’ paper about the government . . . signifies that the workers are regarded as being little children. . . . The workers are not babies.” (*Svoboda*, published by the Revolutionary Socialist group, pp. 69-70.)

D. WHAT IS THERE IN COMMON BETWEEN ECONOMISM
AND TERRORISM?

In the last footnote we quoted the opinion of an Economist and of a non-Social-Democratic terrorist who, by chance, proved to be in agreement with him. Speaking generally, however, between the two there is not an accidental, but a necessary, inherent connection, about which we shall have to speak further on, but which must be dealt with here in connection with the question of training the masses in revolutionary activity. The Economists and the modern terrorists spring from a common root, namely, *subservience to spontaneity*, which we dealt with in the preceding chapter as a general phenomenon, and which we shall now examine in relation to its effect upon political activity and the political struggle. At first sight, our assertion may appear paradoxical, for the difference between these two appears to be so enormous: one stresses the "drab every-day struggle" and the other calls for the most self-sacrificing struggle of individuals. But this is not a paradox. The Economists and terrorists merely bow to different poles of spontaneity: the Economists bow to the spontaneity of the "pure and simple" labour movement, while the terrorists bow to the spontaneity of the passionate indignation of the intellectuals, who are either incapable of linking up the revolutionary struggle with the labour movement, or lack the opportunity to do so. It is very difficult indeed for those who have lost their belief, or who have never believed that this is possible, to find some other outlet for their indignation and revolutionary energy than terror. Thus, both the forms of subservience to spontaneity we have mentioned are nothing more nor less than *a beginning in the carrying out* of the notorious *Credo* programme. Let the workers carry on their "economic struggle against the employers and the government" (we apologise to the author of the *Credo* for expressing his views in Martynov's words! But we think we have the right to do so because even the *Credo* says that in the economic struggle the workers "come up against the political regime"), and let the intellectuals conduct the political struggle by their own efforts—with the aid of terror, of course!

This is an absolutely logical and inevitable *conclusion* which must be insisted upon—even though those who are beginning to carry out this programme did not themselves realise that it is inevitable. Political activity has its logic quite apart from the consciousness of those who, with the best intentions, call either for terror or for giving the economic struggle itself a political character. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, and, in this case, good intentions cannot save one from being spontaneously drawn “along the line of least resistance,” along the line of the *purely bourgeois Credo* programme. Surely it is not an accident that many Russian liberals—avowed liberals and liberals who wear the mask of Marxism—wholeheartedly sympathise with terror and strive to foster the spirit of terrorism that is running so high at the present time.*

The formation of the *Svoboda* Revolutionary Socialist group **—which was formed with the object of giving all possible assistance to the labour movement, but which included in its *programme* terror, and emancipation, so to speak, from Social-Democracy—this fact once again confirmed the remarkable penetration of P. B. Axelrod who *literally foretold* these results of Social-Democratic wavering *as far back as* the end of 1897 (*Modern Tasks and Modern Tactics*), when he outlined his remarkable “two prospects.”*** All the subsequent disputes and disagreements among Russian Social-Democrats are contained, like a plant in the seed, in these two prospects.¹

¹ Martynov “conceives of another, more realistic [?] dilemma” (*Social-Democracy and the Working Class*, p. 19): “Either Social-Democracy undertakes the direct leadership of the economic struggle of the proletariat and by that [!] transforms it into a revolutionary class struggle. . .” “by that,” *i.e.*, apparently the direct leadership of the economic struggle. Can Martynov quote an example where the leadership of the industrial struggle *alone* has succeeded in transforming the trade union movement into a revolutionary class movement? Cannot he understand that in order to “transform” we must undertake the “direct leadership” of *all-sided* political agitation? “. . . Or the other prospect: Social-Democracy refrains from taking the leadership of the economic struggle of the workers and so . . . clips its own wings. . .” In *Rabocheye Dyelo’s* opinion, which we quoted above, *Iskra* “refrains.” We have seen, however, that the latter *does far more* to lead the economic struggle than *Rabocheye Dyelo*, but it does not confine itself to this, and does not *curtail* its political tasks for the sake of it.

From this point of view it will be clear that *Rabocheye Dyelo*, being unable to withstand the spontaneity of Economism, has been unable also to withstand the spontaneity of terrorism. It would be interesting to note here the specific arguments that *Svoboda* advanced in defence of terrorism. It "completely denies" the deterrent role of terrorism (*The Regeneration of Revolutionism*, p. 64), but instead stresses its "excitative significance." This is characteristic, first, as representing one of the stages of the break-up and decay of the traditional (pre-Social-Democratic) cycle of ideas which insisted upon terrorism. To admit now that the government cannot be "terrified," and therefore disrupted, by terror, is tantamount to condemning terror as a system of struggle, as a sphere of activity sanctioned by the programme. Secondly, it is still more characteristic as an example of the failure to understand our immediate task of "training the masses in revolutionary activity." *Svoboda* advocates terror as a means of "exciting" the labour movement, and of giving it a "strong impetus." It is difficult to imagine an argument that disproves itself more than this one does! Are there not enough outrages committed in Russian life that a special "stimulant" has to be invented? On the other hand, is it not obvious that those who are not, and cannot be, roused to excitement even by Russian tyranny will stand by "twiddling their thumbs" even while a handful of terrorists are engaged in single combat with the government? The fact is, however, that the masses of the workers are roused to a high pitch of excitement by the outrages committed in Russian life, but we are unable to collect, if one may put it that way, and concentrate all these drops and streamlets of popular excitement, which are called forth by the conditions of Russian life to a far larger extent than we imagine, but which it is precisely necessary to combine into a *single* gigantic flood. That this can be accomplished is irrefutably proved by the enormous growth of the labour movement, and the greed with which the workers devour political literature, to which we have already referred above. Calls for terror and calls to give the economic struggle itself a political character are merely two different forms of *evading* the most

pressing duty that now rests upon Russian revolutionaries, namely, to organise all-sided political agitation. *Svoboda* desires to *substitute* terror for agitation, openly admitting that "as soon as intensified and strenuous agitation is commenced among the masses its excitative function will be finished." (*The Regeneration of Revolutionism*, p. 68.) This proves precisely that both the terrorists and the Economists *underestimate* the revolutionary activity of the masses, in spite of the striking evidence of the events that took place in the spring,¹ and whereas one goes out in search of artificial "stimulants," the other talks about "concrete demands." But both fail to devote sufficient attention to the development of *their own activity* in political agitation and organisation of political exposures. And no other work can serve as a *substitute* for this work either at the present time or at any other time.

E. THE WORKING CLASS AS CHAMPION OF DEMOCRACY

We have seen that the carrying on of wide political agitation, and consequently the organisation of all-sided political exposures, is an absolutely necessary and *paramount* task of activity, that is, if that activity is to be truly Social-Democratic. We arrived at this conclusion *solely* on the grounds of the pressing needs of the working class for political knowledge and political training. But this presentation of the question is too narrow, for it ignores the general democratic tasks of Social-Democracy in general, and of modern Russian Social-Democracy in particular. In order to explain the situation more concretely we shall approach the subject from an aspect that is "nearer" to the Economist, namely, from the practical aspect. "Everyone agrees" that it is necessary to develop the political consciousness of the working class. But the question arises, how is that to be done? What must be done to bring this about? The economic struggle merely brings the workers "up against" questions concerning the attitude of the government towards the working class. Consequently, *however much we may try* to give the "economic

¹This refers to the big street demonstrations which commenced in the spring of 1901. [Author's note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.]

struggle itself a political character" *we shall never be able* to develop the political consciousness of the workers (to the degree of Social-Democratic consciousness) by confining ourselves to the economic struggle, for *the limits of this task are too narrow*. The Martynov formula has some value for us, not because it illustrates Martynov's ability to confuse things, but because it strikingly expresses the fundamental error that all the Economists commit, namely, their conviction that it is possible to develop the class political consciousness of the workers *from within* the economic struggle, so to speak, *i.e.*, making the economic struggle the exclusive, or, at least, the main starting point, making the economic struggle the exclusive, or, at least, the main basis. Such a view is radically wrong. Piqued by our opposition to them, the Economists refuse to ponder deeply over the origins of these disagreements, with the result that we absolutely fail to understand each other. It is as if we spoke in different tongues.

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships between *all* the various classes and strata and the state and the government—the sphere of the interrelations between *all* the various classes. For that reason, the reply to the question: what must be done in order to bring political knowledge to the workers? cannot be merely the one which, in the majority of cases, the practical workers, especially those who are inclined towards Economism, usually content themselves with, *i.e.*, "go among the workers." To bring political knowledge to the *workers* the Social-Democrats must *go among all classes of the population*, must despatch units of their army *in all directions*.

We deliberately select this awkward formula, we deliberately express ourselves in a simple, forcible way, not because we desire to indulge in paradoxes, but in order to "stimulate" the Economists to take up their tasks which they unpardonably ignore, to make them understand the difference between trade

union and Social-Democratic politics, which they refuse to understand. Therefore, we beg the reader not to get excited, but to listen patiently to the end.

Take the type of Social-Democratic circle that has been most widespread during the past few years, and examine its work. It has "contacts with the workers," it issues leaflets—in which abuses in the factories, the government's partiality towards the capitalists and the tyranny of the police are strongly condemned—and it rests content with this. At meetings of workers the discussions never, or rarely, go beyond the limits of these subjects. Lectures and discussions on the history of the revolutionary movement, on questions of the home and foreign policy of our government, on questions of the economic evolution of Russia and of Europe, and the position of the various classes in modern society, etc., are extremely rare. Of systematically acquiring and extending contact with other classes of society, no one even dreams. The ideal leader, as the majority of the members of such circles picture him, is something more in the nature of a trade union secretary than a Socialist political leader. Any trade union secretary, an English one for instance, helps the workers to conduct the economic struggle, helps to expose factory abuses, explains the injustice of the laws and of measures which hamper the freedom to strike and the freedom to picket (*i.e.*, to warn all and sundry that a strike is proceeding at a certain factory), explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade union secretary conducts and helps to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government." It cannot be too strongly insisted that *this is not* enough to constitute Social-Democracy. The Social-Democrat's ideal should not be a trade union secretary, but *a tribune of the people*, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; he must be able to group all these manifestations into a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; he must be able to take advantage of every petty event in order to explain his socialistic convictions and his

Social-Democratic demands *to all*, in order to explain to *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. Compare, for example, a leader like Robert Knight (the celebrated secretary and leader of the Boiler-Makers' Society, one of the most powerful trade unions in England) with Wilhelm Liebknecht, and then take the contrasts that Martynov draws in his controversy with *Iskra*. You will see—I am running through Martynov's article—that Robert Knight engaged more in “calling the masses to certain concrete actions,” while Liebknecht engaged more in “the revolutionary explanation of the whole of modern society, or various manifestations of it”; that Robert Knight “formulated the immediate demands of the proletariat and pointed to the manner in which they can be achieved,” whereas Wilhelm Liebknecht, while doing this, “simultaneously guided the activities of various opposition strata,” “dictated to them a positive programme of action”¹; that it was precisely Robert Knight who strove “as far as possible to give the economic struggle itself a political character” and was excellently able “to submit to the government concrete demands promising certain palpable results,” while Liebknecht engaged more in “one-sided exposures”; that Robert Knight attached more significance to the “forward march of the drab, every-day struggle,” while Liebknecht attached more significance to the “propaganda of brilliant and finished ideas”; that Liebknecht converted the paper he was directing into “an organ of revolutionary opposition exposing the present system and particularly the political conditions which came into conflict with the interests of the most varied strata of the population,” whereas Robert Knight “worked for the cause of labour in close organic contact with the proletarian struggle”—if by “close and organic contact” is meant the subservience to spontaneity which we studied above from the example of Krichevsky and Martynov—and “restricted the sphere of his influence,” convinced, of course, as is Martynov, that “by that he intensified that in-

¹For example, during the Franco-Prussian War, Liebknecht dictated a programme of action *for the whole of democracy*—and this was done to an even greater extent by Marx and Engels in 1848.

fluence." In a word, you will see that *de facto* Martynov reduces Social-Democracy to the level of trade unionism, and he does this, of course, not because he does not desire the good of Social-Democracy, but simply because he is a little too much in a hurry to make Plekhanov more profound, instead of taking the trouble to understand him.

Let us return, however, to the elucidation of our thesis. We said that a Social-Democrat, if he really believes it is necessary to develop the all-sided political consciousness of the proletariat, must "go among all classes of the people." This gives rise to the questions: How is this to be done? Have we enough forces to do this? Is there a base for such work among all the other classes? Will this not mean a retreat, or lead to a retreat, from the class point of view? We shall deal with these questions.

We must "go among all classes of the people" as theoreticians, as propagandists, as agitators and as organisers. No one doubts that the theoretical work of Social-Democrats should be directed towards studying all the features of the social and political position of the various classes. But extremely little is done in this direction as compared with the work that is done in studying the features of factory life. In the committees and circles, you will meet men who are immersed, say, in the study of some special branch of the metal industry, but you will hardly ever find members of organisations (obliged, as often happens, for some reason or other to give up practical work) especially engaged in the collection of material concerning some pressing question of social and political life which could serve as a means for conducting Social-Democratic work among other strata of the population. In speaking of the lack of training of the majority of present-day leaders of the labour movement, we cannot refrain from mentioning the point about training in this connection also, for it too is bound up with the "economic" conception of "close organic contact with the proletarian struggle." The principal thing, of course, is *propaganda and agitation* among all strata of the people. The West European Social-Democrats find their work in this field facilitated by the calling of public meetings, to which *all* are free to go, and by

the parliament, in which they speak to the representatives of *all* classes. We have neither a parliament nor the freedom to call meetings, nevertheless we are able to arrange meetings of workers who desire to listen to a *Social-Democrat*. We must also find ways and means of calling meetings of representatives of all classes of the population that desire to listen to a *democrat*; for he who forgets that "the Communists support every revolutionary movement," that we are obliged for that reason to expound and emphasise *general democratic tasks before the whole people*, without for a moment concealing our socialistic convictions, is not a Social-Democrat. He who forgets his obligation to *be in advance of everybody* in bringing up, sharpening and solving every general democratic problem is not a Social-Democrat.

"But everybody agrees with this!"—the impatient reader will exclaim—and the new instructions given by the last Congress of the League to the editorial board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* say: "All events of social and political life that affect the proletariat either directly as a special class or *as the vanguard of all the revolutionary forces in the struggle for freedom* should serve as subjects for political propaganda and agitation." (*Two Congresses*, p. 17, our italics.) Yes, these are very true and very good words and we would be satisfied if *Rabocheye Dyelo understood them and if it refrained from saying in the next breath things that are the very opposite of them*.

Ponder over the following piece of Martynov reasoning. On page 40 he says that *Iskra's* tactics of exposing abuses are one-sided, that "however much we may spread distrust and hatred towards the government, we shall not achieve our aim until we have succeeded in developing sufficiently active social energy for its overthrow."

This, it may be said in parenthesis, is the concern, with which we are already familiar, for increasing the activity of the masses, while at the same time striving to restrict one's own activity. This is not the point we are now discussing, however. Martynov, therefore, speaks of *revolutionary* energy ("for overthrowing"). But what conclusion does he arrive at? As in ordinary times, various social strata inevitably march separately.

"In view of that, it is clear that we Social-Democrats cannot simultaneously guide the activities of various opposition strata, we cannot dictate to them a positive programme of action, we cannot point out to them in what manner they can fight for their daily interests. . . . The liberal strata will themselves take care of the active struggle for their immediate interests and this struggle will bring them up against our political regime." (P. 41.)

Thus, having commenced by speaking of revolutionary energy, of the active struggle for the overthrow of the autocracy, Martynov immediately turned towards trade union energy and active struggle for immediate interests! It goes without saying that we cannot guide the struggle of the students, liberals, etc., for their "immediate interests," but this is not the point we are arguing about, most worthy Economist! The point we are discussing is the possible and necessary participation of various social strata in the overthrow of the autocracy; not only are we able, but it is our duty, to guide *these* "activities of the various opposition strata" if we desire to be the "vanguard." Not only will the students and our liberals, etc., themselves take care of "the struggle that will bring them up against our political regime"; the police and the officials of the autocratic government will see to this more than anyone else. But if "we" desire to be advanced democrats, we must make it our business to *stimulate* in the minds of those who are dissatisfied only with university, or only with Zemstvo, etc., conditions the idea that the whole political system is worthless. We must take upon ourselves the task of organising a universal political struggle under the leadership of *our Party* in such a manner as to obtain all the support possible of all opposition strata for the struggle and for our Party. We must train our Social-Democratic practical workers to become political leaders, able to guide all the manifestations of this universal struggle, able at the right time to "dictate a positive programme of action" for the discontented students, for the discontented Zemstvo Councillors, for the discontented religious sects, for the offended elementary school teachers, etc., etc. For that reason, Martynov's assertion—that "with regard to these, we can come forward merely in *the negative* role of exposers of abuses . . . we can *only* [our italics] dissipate the hopes they

have in various government commissions"—*is absolutely wrong*. By saying this Martynov shows that *he absolutely fails to understand* the role the revolutionary "vanguard" must really play. If the reader bears this in mind, the *real sense* of the following concluding remarks by Martynov will be clear to him:

"*Iskra* is the organ of the revolutionary opposition which exposes the abuses of our system, particularly political abuses, in so far as they affect the interests of the most diverse classes of the population. We, however, are working and will continue to work for the cause of labour in close organic contact with the proletarian struggle. By restricting the sphere of our influence, we intensify that influence."

The true sense of this conclusion is as follows: *Iskra* desires to elevate working class trade union politics (to which, owing to misunderstanding, lack of training, or by conviction, our practical workers frequently confine themselves) to Social-Democratic politics, whereas *Rabocheye Dyelo* desires to *degrade* Social-Democratic politics to trade union politics. And while doing this, they assure the world that these two positions are "quite compatible in the common cause." *O! Sancta simplicitas!*

To proceed. Have we sufficient forces to be able to direct our propaganda and agitation among *all* classes of the population? Of course we have. Our Economists are frequently inclined to deny this. They lose sight of the gigantic progress our movement has made from (approximately) 1894 to 1901. Like real "*khnostists*," they frequently live in the distant past, in the period of the beginning of the movement. At that time, indeed, we had astonishingly few forces, and it was perfectly natural and legitimate then to resolve to go exclusively among the workers, and severely condemn any deviation from this. The whole task then was to consolidate our position in the working class. At the present time, however, gigantic forces have been attracted to the movement; the best representatives of the young generation of the educated classes are coming over to us; all over the country there are people compelled to live in the provinces, who have taken part in the movement in the past and desire to do so now, who are gravitating towards Social-Democracy (in 1894 you could count the Social-Democrats on your fingers). One of the principal political and organisational shortcomings of

our movement is that we are *unable* to utilise all these forces and give them appropriate work (we shall deal with this in detail in the next chapter). The overwhelming majority of these forces entirely lack the opportunity of "going among the workers," so there are no grounds for fearing that we shall deflect forces from our main cause. And in order to be able to provide the workers with real, universal and live political knowledge, we must have "our own men," Social-Democrats, everywhere, among all social strata, and in all positions from which we can learn the inner springs of our state mechanism. Such men are required for propaganda and agitation, but in a still larger measure for organisation.

Is there scope for activity among all classes of the population? Those who fail to see this also lag behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses as far as class consciousness is concerned. The labour movement has aroused and is continuing to arouse discontent in some, hopes for support for the opposition in others, and the consciousness of the intolerableness and inevitable downfall of autocracy in still others. We would be "politicians" and Social-Democrats only in name (as very often happens), if we failed to realise that our task is to utilise every manifestation of discontent, and to collect and utilise every grain of even rudimentary protest. This is quite apart from the fact that many millions of the peasantry, handicraftsmen, petty artisans, etc., always listen eagerly to the preachings of any Social-Democrat who is at all intelligent. Is there a single class of the population in which no individuals, groups or circles are to be found who are discontented with the state of tyranny and, therefore, accessible to the propaganda of Social-Democrats as the spokesmen of the most pressing general democratic needs? To those who desire to have a clear idea of what the political agitation of a Social-Democrat *among all* classes and strata of the population should be like, we would point to *political exposures* in the broad sense of the word as the principal (but of course not the sole) form of this agitation.

We must "arouse in every section of the population that is at all enlightened a passion for *political exposure*," I wrote in my

article "Where to Begin?" (*Iskra*, No. 4, May 1901), with which I shall deal in greater detail later.

"We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged by the fact that the voice of political exposure is still feeble, rare and timid. This is not because of a general submission to political despotism, but because those who are able and ready to expose have no tribune from which to speak, because there is no audience to listen eagerly to and approve of what the orators say, and because the latter do not see anywhere among the people forces to whom it would be worth while directing their complaint against the 'omnipotent' Russian government. . . . We are now in a position, and it is our duty, to set up a tribune for the national exposure of the tsarist government. That tribune must be a Social-Democratic paper."¹

The ideal audience for these political exposures is the working class, which is first and foremost in need of universal and live political knowledge, which is most capable of converting this knowledge into active struggle, even if it does not promise "palpable results." The only platform from which *public* exposures can be made is an all-Russian newspaper. "Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable in modern Europe." In this connection Russia must undoubtedly be included in modern Europe. The press has long ago become a power in our country, otherwise the government would not spend tens of thousands of rubles to bribe it, and to subsidise the Katkovs and Meshcherskys. And it is no novelty in autocratic Russia for the underground press to break through the wall of censorship and *compel* the legal and conservative press to speak openly of it. This was the case in the 'seventies and even in the 'fifties. How much broader and deeper are now the strata of the people willing to read the illegal underground press, and to learn from it "how to live and how to die," to use the expression of the worker who sent a letter to *Iskra*. (No. 7.) Political exposures are as much a declaration of war against the *government* as economic exposures are a declaration of war against the employers. And the wider and more powerful this campaign of exposure is, the more numerous and determined the social *class*, which has *declared war in order to commence the war*, will be, the greater will be the moral signi-

¹ See page 20 in this volume.—*Ed.*

ficance of this declaration of war. Hence, political exposures in themselves serve as a powerful instrument for *disintegrating* the system we oppose, the means for diverting from the enemy his casual or temporary allies, the means for spreading enmity and distrust among those who permanently share power with the autocracy.

Only a party that will *organise* real, *public* exposures can become the vanguard of the revolutionary forces in our time. The word "public" has a very profound meaning. The overwhelming majority of the non-working class expositors (and in order to become the vanguard, we must attract other classes) are sober politicians and cool businessmen. They know perfectly well how dangerous it is to "complain" even against a minor official, let alone against the "omnipotent" Russian government. And they will come *to us* with their complaints only when they see that these complaints really have effect, and when they see that we represent a *political* force. In order to become this political force in the eyes of outsiders, much persistent and stubborn work is required to *raise* our own consciousness, initiative and energy. For this, it is not sufficient to stick the label "vanguard" on rearguard theory and practice.

But if we have to undertake the organisation of the real, public exposure of the government, in what way will the class character of our movement be expressed?—the over-zealous advocates of "close organic contact with the proletarian struggle" will ask us. The reply is: in that we *Social-Democrats* will *organise* these public exposures; in that all the questions that are brought up by the agitation will be explained in the spirit of Social-Democracy, without any concessions to deliberate or unconscious distortions of Marxism; in the fact that *the Party* will carry on this universal political agitation, uniting into one inseparable whole the pressure upon the government in the name of the whole people, the revolutionary training of the proletariat—while preserving its political independence—the guidance of the economic struggle of the working class, the utilisation of all its spontaneous conflicts with its exploiters, which rouse and bring into our camp increasing numbers of the proletariat.

But one of the characteristic features of Economism is its failure to understand this connection. More than that—it fails to understand the identity of the most pressing needs of the proletariat (an all-sided political education through the medium of political agitation and political exposures) with the needs of the general democratic movement. This lack of understanding is not only expressed in “Martynovist” phrases, but also in the reference to the class point of view which is identical in meaning with these phrases. The following, for example, is how the authors of the “economic” letter in No. 12 of *Iskra* expressed themselves.¹

“This fundamental drawback [overestimating ideology] is the cause of *Iskra’s* inconsistency in regard to the question of the relations between Social-Democrats and various social classes and tendencies. By a process of theoretical reasoning [and not by “the growth of Party tasks which grow together with the Party”], *Iskra* arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary immediately to take up the struggle against absolutism, but in all probability sensing the difficulty of this task for the workers in the present state of affairs [not only sensing, but knowing perfectly well that this problem would seem less difficult to the workers than to those Economist intellectuals who are concerned about little children, for the workers are prepared to fight even for demands which, to use the language of the never-to-be-forgotten Martynov, do not “promise palpable results”] . . . and lacking the patience to wait until the working class has accumulated forces for this struggle, *Iskra* begins to seek for allies in the ranks of the liberals and intelligentsia.”

Yes, yes, we have indeed lost all “patience” to “wait” for the blessed time that has long been promised us by the “conciliators,” when the Economists will stop throwing the blame for their *own* backwardness upon the workers, and stop justifying their own lack of energy by the alleged lack of forces among the workers. We ask our Economists: what does “the working class accumulating forces for this struggle” mean? Is it not evident that it means the political training of the workers, revealing to

¹ Lack of space has prevented us from replying in full, in *Iskra*, to this letter, which is extremely characteristic of the Economists. We were very glad this letter appeared, for the charges brought against *Iskra*, that it did not maintain a consistent, class point of view, have reached us long ago from various sources, and we have been waiting for an appropriate opportunity, or for a formulated expression of this fashionable charge, to reply to it. And it is our habit to reply to attacks, not by defence, but by counter-attacks.

them *all* the aspects of our despicable autocracy? And is it not clear that *precisely for this work* we need "allies in the ranks of the liberals and intelligentsia," who are prepared to join us in the exposure of the political attack on the Zemstvo, on the teachers, on the statisticians, on the students, etc.? Is this "cunning mechanism" so difficult to understand after all? Has not P. B. Axelrod repeated to you over and over again since 1897: "The problem of the Russian Social-Democrats acquiring direct and indirect allies among the non-proletarian classes will be solved principally by the character of the propagandist activities conducted among the proletariat itself"? And Martynov and the other Economists continue to imagine that the workers must *first* accumulate forces (for trade union politics) "in the economic struggle against the employers and the government," and then "go over" (we suppose from trade union "training for activity") to Social-Democratic activity.

". . . In its quest," continue the Economists, "*Iskra* not infrequently departs from the class point of view, obscures class antagonisms and puts into the forefront the general character of the prevailing discontent with the government, notwithstanding the fact that the causes and the degree of this discontent vary very considerably among the 'allies.' Such, for example, is *Iskra's* attitude towards the Zemstvo. . . ."

Iskra, it is alleged, "promises the nobility, who are discontented with the government's doles, the aid of the working class, but does not say a word about the class differences among these strata of the people." If the reader will turn to the series of articles "The Autocracy and the Zemstvo" (Nos. 2 and 4 of *Iskra*), to which, *in all probability*, the author of the letter refers, he will find that these articles¹ deal with the attitude of the *government* towards the "mild agitation of the feudal-bureaucratic Zemstvo," and towards the "independent activity of even the propertied classes." In these articles it is stated that the workers cannot look on indifferently while the government is carrying on a fight against the Zemstvo, and the latter are called upon to give up making soft speeches, and to speak firmly and

¹ And among these articles there was one (*Iskra*, No. 3) especially dealing with the class antagonisms in the countryside. [See "The Workers' Party and the Peasantry" in this volume.—*Ed.*]

resolutely when revolutionary Social-Democracy confronts the government in all its strength. What there is in this that the authors of the letter do not agree with is not clear. Do they think that the workers will "not understand" the phrases "propertied classes" and "feudal-bureaucratic Zemstvo"? Do they think that *stimulating* the Zemstvo to abandon soft speeches and to speak firmly and resolutely is "overestimating ideology"? Do they imagine that the workers can accumulate "forces" for the fight against absolutism if they know nothing about the attitude of absolutism towards the Zemstvo? All this remains unknown. One thing alone is clear and that is that the authors of the letter have a very vague idea of what the political tasks of Social-Democracy are. This is revealed still more clearly by their remark: "Such also [*i.e.*, also "obscures class antagonisms"] is *Iskra's* attitude towards the student movement." Instead of calling upon the workers to declare by means of public demonstrations that the real centre of unbridled violence and outrage is not the students but the Russian government (*Iskra*, No. 2), we should, no doubt, have inserted arguments in the spirit of *Rabochaya Mysl*. And such ideas were expressed by Social-Democrats in the autumn of 1901, after the events of February and March,¹ on the eve of a fresh revival of the student movement, which revealed that even in this sphere the "spontaneous" protest against the autocracy is "*outstripping*" the conscious Social-Democratic leadership of the movement. The spontaneous striving of the workers to defend the students who were beaten up by the police and the Cossacks is outstripping the conscious activity of the Social-Democratic organisations.

"And yet in other articles," continue the authors of the letter, "*Iskra* condemns all compromises, and defends, for example, the intolerant conduct of the Guesdists." We would advise those who usually so conceitedly and frivolously declare in connection with the disagreements existing among the contemporary Social-Democrats that the disagreements are unimportant and would not justify a split, to ponder very deeply over these words. Is it possible for those who say that we have done

¹ See explanatory note to page 17.**—Ed.

astonishingly little to explain the hostility of the autocracy towards the various classes, and to inform the workers of the opposition of the various strata of the population towards autocracy, to work successfully in the same organisation with those who say that such work is "compromise"—evidently compromise with the theory of the "economic struggle against the employers and the government"?

We urged the necessity of introducing the class struggle in the rural districts on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the emancipation of the peasantry (No. 3) and spoke of the irreconcilability between the local government bodies and the autocracy in connection with Witte's secret memorandum. (No. 4.) We attacked the feudal landlords and the government which served the latter on the occasion of the passing of the new law (No. 8), and welcomed the illegal Zemstvo congress that was held. We urged the Zemstvo to stop making degrading petitions (No. 8), and to come out and fight. We encouraged the students, who had begun to understand the need for the political struggle and to take up that struggle (No. 3) and, at the same time, we lashed out at the "barbarous lack of understanding" revealed by the adherents of the "purely student" movement, who called upon the students to abstain from taking part in the street demonstrations (No. 3, in connection with the manifesto issued by the executive committee of the Moscow students on February 25). We exposed the "senseless dreams" and the "lying hypocrisy" of the cunning liberals of *Rossiya* (No. 5) and at the same time we commented on the fury with which "peaceful writers, aged professors, scientists and well-known liberal Zemstvo-ists were handled in the government's mental dungeons." (No. 5, "A Police Raid on Literature.") We exposed the real significance of the programme of "state concern for the welfare of the workers," and welcomed the "valuable admission" that "it is better by granting reforms from above to forestall the demand for such reforms from below, than to wait for those demands to be put forward." (No. 6.) We encouraged the protests of the statisticians (No. 7), and censured the strike-breaking statisticians. (No. 9.)* He who

sees in these tactics the obscuring of the class consciousness of the proletariat and *compromise with liberalism* shows that he absolutely fails to understand the true significance of the programme of the *Credo* and is carrying out that programme *de facto*, however much he may deny this! Because by that he drags Social-Democracy towards the "economic struggle against the employers and the government" but *yields to liberalism*, abandons the task of actively intervening in every "liberal" question and of defining *his own* Social-Democratic attitude towards such questions.

F. AGAIN "SLANDERERS," AGAIN "MYSTIFIERS"

These polite expressions were uttered by *Rabocheye Dyelo* which in this way answers our charge that it "indirectly prepared the ground for converting the labour movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy." In its simplicity of heart *Rabocheye Dyelo* decided that this accusation was nothing more than a polemical sally, as if to say, these malicious doctrinaires can only think of saying unpleasant things about us; now what can be more unpleasant than being an instrument of bourgeois democracy? And so they print in heavy type a "refutation": "nothing but downright slander" (*Two Congresses*), "mystification," "masquerade." Like Jupiter, *Rabocheye Dyelo* (although it has little resemblance to Jupiter) is angry because it is wrong, and proves by its hasty abuse that it is incapable of understanding its opponents' mode of reasoning. And yet, with only a little reflection it would have understood why *all* subservience to the spontaneity of the mass movement and *any* degrading of Social-Democratic politics to trade union politics mean precisely preparing the ground for converting the labour movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy. The spontaneous labour movement by itself is able to create (and inevitably will create) only trade unionism, and working class trade union politics are precisely working class bourgeois politics. The fact that the working class participates in the political struggle and even in political revolution does not in itself make its politics Social-Democratic politics.

Rabocheye Dyelo imagines that bourgeois democracy in Russia is merely a "phantom."¹ (*Two Congresses.*) Happy people! Like the ostrich, they bury their heads in the sand, and imagine that everything around has disappeared. A number of liberal publicists who month after month proclaimed to the world their triumph over the collapse and even disappearance of Marxism; a number of liberal newspapers (*S. Peterburgskiye Vedomosti*,² *Russkiye Vedomosti* and many others) which encouraged the liberals who bring to the workers the Brentano conception of the class struggle* and the trade union conception of politics; the galaxy of critics of Marxism, whose real tendencies were so very well disclosed by the *Credo* and whose literary products alone circulate freely in Russia; the animation among revolutionary non-Social-Democratic tendencies, particularly after the February and March events—all these, of course, are mere phantoms! All these, of course, have nothing at all to do with bourgeois democracy!

Rabocheye Dyelo and the authors of the economic letter published in *Iskra*, No. 12, should "ponder over the reason why the events in the spring excited such animation among the revolutionary non-Social-Democratic tendencies instead of increasing the authority and the prestige of Social-Democracy." The reason was that we failed to cope with our tasks. The masses of the workers proved to be more active than we; we lacked adequately trained revolutionary leaders and organisers aware of the mood prevailing among all the opposition strata and able to march at the head of the movement, convert the spontaneous demonstrations into a political demonstration,

¹ Then follows a reference to the "concrete Russian conditions which fatalistically impel the labour movement onto the revolutionary path." But these people refuse to understand that the revolutionary path of the labour movement might not be a Social-Democratic path! When absolutism reigned in Western Europe, the entire West European bourgeoisie "impelled," and deliberately impelled, the workers onto the path of revolution. We Social-Democrats, however, cannot be satisfied with that. And if we, by any means whatever, degrade Social-Democratic politics to the level of spontaneous trade union politics, we, by that, play into the hands of bourgeois democracy.

² *St. Petersburg News.*—Ed. Eng. ed.

broaden its political character, etc. Under such circumstances, our backwardness will inevitably be utilised by the more mobile and more energetic non-Social-Democratic revolutionaries, and the workers, no matter how strenuously and self-sacrificingly they may fight the police and the troops, no matter how revolutionary they may act, will prove to be merely a force supporting these revolutionaries, the rearguard of bourgeois democracy, and not the Social-Democratic vanguard. Take, for example, the German Social-Democrats, whose weak sides alone our Economists desire to emulate. Why is it that *not a single* political event takes place in Germany without adding to the authority and prestige of Social-Democracy? Because Social-Democracy is always found to be in advance of all others in its revolutionary estimation of every event and in its championship of every protest against tyranny. It does not soothe itself by arguments about the economic struggle bringing the workers up against their own lack of rights, and about concrete conditions fatalistically impelling the labour movement onto the path of revolution. It intervenes in every sphere and in every question of social and political life: in the matter of Wilhelm's refusal to endorse a bourgeois progressive as city mayor (our Economists have not yet managed to convince the Germans that this in fact is a compromise with liberalism!); in the question of the law against the publication of "immoral" publications and pictures; in the question of the government influencing the election of professors, etc., etc. Everywhere Social-Democracy is found to be ahead of all others, rousing political discontent among all classes, rousing the sluggards, pushing on the laggards and providing a wealth of material for the development of the political consciousness and political activity of the proletariat. The result of all this is that even the avowed enemies of socialism are filled with respect for this advanced political fighter, and sometimes an important document from bourgeois and even from bureaucratic and Court circles makes its way by some miraculous means into the editorial office of *Vorwärts*.

IV

THE PRIMITIVENESS OF THE ECONOMISTS AND THE ORGANISATION OF REVOLUTIONARIES

“RABOCHEYE DYELO’s” assertions—which we have analysed—that the economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of political agitation and that our task now is to give the economic struggle itself a political character, etc., not only express a narrow view of our political tasks, but also of our *organisational tasks*. The “economic struggle against the employers and the government” does not in the least require—and therefore such a struggle can never give rise to—an all-Russian centralised organisation that will combine, in a general attack, all the numerous manifestations of political opposition, protest and indignation, an organisation that will consist of professional revolutionaries and be led by the real political leaders of the whole of the people. And this can be easily understood. The character of the organisation of every institution is naturally and inevitably determined by the character of the activity that institution conducts. Consequently, *Rabocheye Dyelo*, by the above-analysed assertions, not only sanctifies and legitimatises the narrowness of political activity, but also the narrowness of organisational work. And in this case also, as always, it is an organ whose consciousness yields to spontaneity. And yet subservience to spontaneously rising forms of organisation, the lack of appreciation of the narrowness and primitiveness of our organisational work, of the degree to which we still work by “*kustar*¹ methods” in this most important sphere, the lack of such appreciation, I say, is a very serious

¹ *Kustars*—handicraftsmen employing primitive methods in their work.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

complaint from which our movement suffers. It is not a complaint that comes with decline, of course, it is a complaint that comes with growth. But it is precisely at the present time, when the wave of spontaneous indignation is, as it were, washing over us, leaders and organisers of the movement, that a most irreconcilable struggle must be waged against all defence of sluggishness, against any legitimisation of restriction in this matter, and it is particularly necessary to rouse in all those participating in the practical work, in all who are just thinking of taking it up, discontent with the *primitive methods* that prevail among us and an unshakable determination to get rid of them.

A. WHAT ARE PRIMITIVE METHODS?

We shall try to answer this question by describing the activity of a typical Social-Democratic circle of the period of 1894-1901. We have already referred to the manner in which the students became absorbed in Marxism at that period. Of course, these students were not only, or even not so much, absorbed in Marxism as a theory, but as an answer to the question: "what is to be done?"; as a call to march against the enemy. And these new warriors marched to battle with astonishingly primitive equipment and training. In a vast number of cases, they had almost no equipment and absolutely no training. They marched to war like peasants from the plough, snatching up a club. A students' circle having no contacts with the old members of the movement, no contacts with circles in other districts, or even in other parts of the same city (or with other schools), without the various sections of the revolutionary work being in any way organised, having no systematic plan of activity covering any length of time, establishes contacts with the workers and sets to work. The circle gradually expands its propaganda and agitation; by its activities it wins the sympathies of a rather large circle of workers and of a certain section of the educated classes, which provides it with money and from which the "committee" recruits new groups of young people. The charm which the committee

(or the League of Struggle) exercises on the youth increases, its sphere of activity becomes wider and its activities expand quite spontaneously: the very people who a year or a few months previously had spoken at the gatherings of the students' circle and discussed the question, "whither?", who established and maintained contacts with the workers, wrote and published leaflets, now establish contacts with other groups of revolutionaries, procure literature, set to work to establish a local newspaper, begin to talk about organising demonstrations and, finally, commence open hostilities (these open hostilities may, according to circumstances, take the form of the publication of the very first agitational leaflet, or the first newspaper, or of the organisation of the first demonstration). And usually the first action ends in immediate and wholesale arrests. Immediate and wholesale, precisely because these open hostilities were not the result of a systematic and carefully thought-out and gradually prepared plan for a prolonged and stubborn struggle, but simply the result of the spontaneous growth of traditional circle work; because, naturally, the police, in almost every case, knew the principal leaders of the local movement, for they had already "recommended" themselves to the police in their school-days, and the latter only waited for a convenient moment to make their raid. They gave the circle sufficient time to develop its work so that they might obtain a palpable *corpus delicti*,¹ and always allowed several of the persons known to them to remain at liberty in order to act as "decoys" (which, I believe, is the technical term used both by our people and by the gendarmes). One cannot help comparing this kind of warfare with that conducted by a mob of peasants armed with clubs against modern troops. One can only express astonishment at the virility displayed by the movement which expanded, grew and won victories in spite of the total lack of training among the fighters. It is true that from the historical point of view, the primitiveness of equipment was not only inevitable at first, but even *legitimate* as one of the conditions for the wide recruiting of fighters, but as soon as serious operations com-

¹ Offence within the meaning of the law.—Ed.

menced (and they commenced in fact with the strikes in the summer of 1896), the defects in our fighting organisations made themselves felt to an increasing degree. Thrown into confusion at first and committing a number of mistakes (for example, its appeal to the public describing the misdeeds of the Socialists, or the deportation of the workers from the capital to the provincial industrial centres), the government very soon adapted itself to the new conditions of the struggle and managed to place its perfectly equipped detachments of *agents provocateurs*, spies and gendarmes in the required places. Raids became so frequent, affected such a vast number of people and cleared out the local circles so thoroughly that the masses of the workers literally lost all their leaders, the movement assumed an incredibly sporadic character, and it became utterly impossible to establish continuity and coherence in the work. The fact that the local active workers were hopelessly scattered, the casual manner in which the membership of the circles was recruited, the lack of training in and narrow outlook on theoretical, political and organisational questions were all the inevitable result of the conditions described above. Things reached such a pass that in several places the workers, because of our lack of stamina and ability to maintain secrecy, began to lose faith in the intelligentsia and to avoid them: the intellectuals, they said, are much too careless and lay themselves open to police raids!

Anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the movement knows that these primitive methods at last began to be recognised as a disease by all thinking Social-Democrats. And in order that the reader who is not acquainted with the movement may have no grounds for thinking that we are "inventing" a special stage or special disease of the movement, we shall refer once again to the witness we have already quoted. No doubt we shall be excused for the length of the passage quoted:

"While the gradual transition to wider practical activity," writes B---v in *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 6, "a transition which is closely connected with the general transitional period through which the Russian labour movement is now passing, is a characteristic feature . . . there is, however,

another and not less interesting feature in the general mechanism of the Russian workers' revolution. We refer to the *general lack of revolutionary forces fit for action*¹ which is felt not only in St. Petersburg, but throughout the whole of Russia. With the general revival of the labour movement, with the general development of the working masses, with the growing frequency of strikes, and with the mass labour struggle becoming more and more open, which intensifies government persecution, arrests, deportation and exile, *this lack of highly skilled revolutionary forces is becoming more and more marked* and, without a doubt, *must affect the depth and the general character of the movement*. Many strikes take place without the revolutionary organisations exercising any strong and direct influence upon them. . . . A shortage of agitational leaflets and illegal literature is felt. . . . The workers' circles are left without agitators. . . . Simultaneously, there is a constant shortage of funds. In a word, *the growth of the labour movement is outstripping the growth and development of the revolutionary organisations*. The numerical strength of the active revolutionaries is too small to enable them to concentrate in their own hands all the influence exercised upon the whole mass of labour now in a state of unrest, or to give this unrest even a shadow of symmetry and organisation. . . . Separate circles, individual revolutionaries, scattered, uncombined, do not represent a united, strong and disciplined organisation with the planned development of its parts. . . ."

Admitting that the immediate organisation of fresh circles to take the place of those that have been broken up "merely proves the virility of the movement . . . but does not prove the existence of an adequate number of sufficiently fit revolutionary workers," the author concludes:

"The lack of practical training among the St. Petersburg revolutionaries is seen in the results of their work. The recent trials, especially that of the Self-Emancipation group and the Labour versus Capital group,* clearly showed that the young agitator, unacquainted with the details of the conditions of labour and, consequently, unacquainted with the conditions under which agitation must be carried on in a given factory, ignorant of the principles of conspiracy, and understanding only the general principles of Social-Democracy [and it is questionable whether he understands them] is able to carry on his work for perhaps four, five or six months. Then come arrests, which frequently lead to the break-up of the whole organisation, or at all events, of part of it. The question arises, therefore, can the group conduct successful and fruitful activity if its existence is measured by months? Obviously, the defects of the existing organisations cannot be wholly ascribed to the transitional period. . . . Obviously, the numerical and above all the qualitative strength of the organisations operating is not of little importance, and the first task our Social-Democrats must undertake is *effectively to combine the organisations and make a strict selection of their membership*."

¹ All italics ours.

B. PRIMITIVE METHODS AND ECONOMISM

We must now deal with the question that has undoubtedly arisen in the mind of every reader. Have these primitive methods, which are a complaint of growth affecting *the whole of the movement*, any connection with Economism, which is *only one* of the tendencies in Russian Social-Democracy? We think that they have. The lack of practical training, the lack of ability to carry on organisational work is certainly common *to us all*, including those who have stood unswervingly by the point of view of revolutionary Marxism from the very outset. And, of course, no one can blame the practical workers for their lack of practical training. But the term "primitive methods" embraces something more than mere lack of training: it means the restrictedness of revolutionary work generally, the failure to understand that a good organisation of revolutionaries cannot be built up on the basis of such restricted work, and lastly—and most important—it means the attempts to justify this restrictedness and to elevate it to a special "theory," *i.e.*, subservience to spontaneity in this matter also. As soon as such attempts were observed, it became certain that primitive methods are connected with Economism and that we shall never eliminate this restrictedness of our organisational activity until we eliminate Economism generally (*i.e.*, the narrow conception of Marxian theory, of the role of Social-Democracy and of its political tasks). And these attempts were revealed in a twofold direction. Some began to say: the labour masses themselves have not yet brought forward the broad and militant tasks that the revolutionaries desire to "impose" upon them; they must continue for the time being to fight for *immediate* political demands, to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government"¹ (and, naturally, corresponding to this struggle which is "easily understood" by the mass movement there must be an organisation that will be "easily understood" by the most untrained youth). Others, far removed from "gradualness," began to say: it is possible and

¹*Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*, especially the *Reply* to Plekhanov.*

necessary to "bring about a political revolution," but this is no reason whatever for building a strong organisation of revolutionaries to train the proletariat in the steadfast and stubborn struggle. All we need do is to snatch up our old friend, the "handy" wooden club. Speaking without metaphor it means—we must organise a general strike,¹ or we must stimulate the "spiritless" progress of the labour movement by means of "excitative terror."² Both these tendencies, the opportunist and the "revolutionary," bow to the prevailing primitiveness; neither believes that it can be eliminated, neither understands our primary and most imperative practical task, namely, to establish *an organisation of revolutionaries* capable of maintaining the energy, the stability and continuity of the political struggle.

We have just quoted the words of B——v: "The growth of the labour movement is outstripping the growth and development of the revolutionary organisations." This "valuable remark of a close observer" (*Rabocheye Dyelo's* comment on B——v's article) has a twofold value for us. It proves that we were right in our opinion that the principal cause of the present crisis in Russian Social-Democracy is that the *leaders* ("ideologists," revolutionaries, Social-Democrats) *lag behind the spontaneous rising of the masses*. It shows that all the arguments advanced by the authors of the Economist letter in *Iskra*, No. 12, by B. Krichevsky and by Martynov, about the dangers of belittling the significance of the spontaneous elements, about the drab every-day struggle, about the tactics-process, etc., are nothing more than a glorification and defence of primitive methods. These people who cannot pronounce the word "theoretician" without a contemptuous grimace, who describe their genuflections to common lack of training and ignorance as "sensitivity to life," reveal in practice a failure to understand our most imperative *practical* task. To laggards they shout: Keep in step! Don't run ahead! To people suffering from a lack of

¹ See "Who Will Bring About the Political Revolution?" in the symposium published in Russia, entitled *The Proletarian Struggle*. Re-issued by the Kiev Committee.

² *Regeneration of Revolutionism and Svoboda*,

energy and initiative in organisational work, from lack of "plans" for wide and bold organisational work, they shout about the "tactics-process"! The most serious sin we commit is that we *degrade* our political and organisational tasks to the level of the immediate, "palpable," "concrete" interests of the every-day economic struggle; and yet they keep singing to us the old song: give the economic struggle itself a political character. We say again: this kind of thing displays as much "sensitiveness to life" as was displayed by the hero in the popular fable who shouted to a passing funeral procession: many happy returns of the day!

Recall the matchless, truly "Narcissus"-like superciliousness* with which these wiseacres lectured Plekhanov about the "workers' circles generally" (*sic!*) being "incapable of fulfilling political tasks in the real and *practical* sense of the word, *i.e.*, in the sense of the expedient and successful *practical* struggle for political demands." (*Rabocheye Dyelo's Reply*, p. 24.) There are circles and circles, gentlemen! Circles of "kustars," of course, are not capable of fulfilling political tasks and never will be, until they realise the primitiveness of their methods and abandon it. If, besides this, these amateurs are enamoured of their primitive methods, and insist on writing the word "practical" in italics, and imagine that being practical demands that one's tasks be degraded to the level of understanding of the most backward strata of the masses, then they are hopeless, of course, and certainly cannot *fulfil general political tasks*. But circles or heroes like Alexeyev and Myshkin, Khalturin and Zhelyabov¹ are able to fulfil political tasks in the genuine and most practical sense of the term because their passionate preaching meets with response among the spontaneously awakened masses, because their seething energy rouses a corresponding and sustained energy among the revolutionary class. Plekhanov was a thousand times right not only when he pointed to this revolutionary class, not only when he proved that its spontaneous awakening was inevitable, but also when he set the "workers' circles" a great and lofty political task. But you refer to the mass

¹ Famous revolutionaries of the 'seventies.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

movement that has sprung up since that time in order to *degrade* this task, in order to *curtail* the energy and scope of activity of the "workers' circles." If you are not amateurs enamoured of your primitive methods, what are you then? You boast that you are practical, but you fail to see what every Russian practical worker knows, namely, the miracles that the energy, not only of circles, but even of individual persons is able to perform in the revolutionary cause. Or do you think that our movements cannot produce heroes like those that were produced by the movement in the 'seventies? If so, why do you think so? Because we lack training? But we are training ourselves, will train ourselves, and we will be trained! Unfortunately it is true that scum has formed on the surface of the stagnant waters of the "economic struggle against the employers and the government"; there are people among us who kneel in prayer to spontaneity, gazing with awe upon the "posteriors" of the Russian proletariat (as Plekhanov expresses it). But we will rid ourselves of this scum. The time has come when Russian revolutionaries, led by a genuinely revolutionary theory, relying upon the genuinely revolutionary and spontaneously awakening class, can at last—at last!—rise to their full height and exert their giant strength to the utmost. All that is required in order that this may be so is that the masses of our practical workers, and the still larger masses of those who dream of doing practical work even while still at school, shall meet with scorn and ridicule any suggestion that may be made to degrade our political tasks and to restrict the scope of our organisational work. And we shall achieve that, don't you worry, gentlemen! . . .

But if the reader wishes to see the pearls of "Economist" passion for primitive methods, he must, of course, turn from the eclectic and vacillating *Rabocheye Dyelo* to the consistent and determined *Rabochaya Mysl*. In its Special Supplement, p. 13, R. M. wrote:

"Now two words about the so-called revolutionary intelligentsia proper. It is true that on more than one occasion it proved that it was quite prepared to 'enter into determined battle with tsarism!' The unfortunate thing, however, is that, ruthlessly persecuted by the political

police, our revolutionary intelligentsia imagined that the struggle with this political police was the political struggle with the autocracy. That is why, to this day, it cannot understand 'where the forces for the fight against the autocracy are to be obtained.'

What matchless and magnificent contempt for the struggle with the police this worshipper (in the worst sense of the word) of the *spontaneous* movement displays, does he not? He is prepared to *justify* our inability to organise secretly by the argument that with the spontaneous growth of the mass movement, it is not at all important for us to fight against the political police!! Not many would agree to subscribe to this monstrous conclusion; our defects in revolutionary organisation have become too urgent a matter to permit them to do that. And if Martynov would refuse to subscribe to it, it would only be because he is unable, or lacks the courage, to think out his ideas to their logical conclusion. Indeed, does the "task" of prompting the masses to put forward concrete demands promising palpable results call for special efforts to create a stable, centralised, militant organisation of revolutionaries? Cannot such a "task" be carried out even by masses who do not "struggle with the political police"? Moreover, can this task be fulfilled unless, in addition to the few leaders, it is undertaken by the workers (the overwhelming majority), who in fact are *incapable* of "fighting against the political police"? Such workers, average people of the masses, are capable of displaying enormous energy and self-sacrifice in strikes and in street battles with the police and troops, and are capable (in fact, are alone capable) of *determining* the whole outcome of our movement—but the struggle against the *political* police requires special qualities; it requires *professional* revolutionaries. And we must not only see to it that the masses "advance" concrete demands, but also that the masses of the workers "advance" an increasing number of such professional revolutionaries from their own ranks. Thus we have reached the question of the relation between an organisation of professional revolutionaries and the pure and simple labour movement. Although this question has found little reflection in literature, it has greatly engaged us "politicians" in conversations and con-

troversies with those comrades who gravitate more or less towards Economism. It is a question that deserves special treatment. But before taking it up we shall deal with one other quotation in order to illustrate the position we hold in regard to the connection between primitiveness and Economism.

In his *Reply*, N. N. wrote: "The Emancipation of Labour group demands direct struggle against the government without first considering where the material forces for this struggle are to be obtained, and without indicating '*the path of the struggle*.'" Emphasising the last words, the author adds the following footnote to the word "path": "This cannot be explained by the conspiratorial aims pursued, because the programme does not refer to secret plotting but to a *mass movement*. The masses cannot proceed by secret paths. Can we conceive of a secret strike? Can we conceive of secret demonstrations and petitions?" (*Vademecum*, p. 59.) Thus, the author approaches quite closely to the question of the "material forces" (organisers of strikes and demonstrations) and to the "paths" of the struggle, but, nevertheless, is still in a state of consternation, because he "worships" the mass movement, *i.e.*, he regards it as something that *relieves* us of the necessity of carrying on revolutionary activity and not as something that should embolden us and *stimulate* our revolutionary activity. Secret strikes are impossible—for those who take a direct and immediate part in them, but a strike may remain (and in the majority of cases does remain) a "secret" to the masses of the Russian workers, because the government takes care to cut all communication between strikers, takes care to prevent all news of strikes from spreading. Now here indeed is a special "struggle with the political police" required, a struggle that can never be conducted by such large masses as usually take part in strikes. Such a struggle must be organised, according to "all the rules of the art," by people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity. The fact that the masses are spontaneously entering the movement does not make the organisation of this struggle *less necessary*. On the contrary, it makes it *more necessary*; for we Socialists would be failing in our duty to the

masses if we did not prevent the police from making a secret of (and if we did not ourselves sometimes secretly prepare) every strike and every demonstration. *And we shall succeed in doing this*, precisely because the spontaneously awakening masses will *also advance from their own ranks* increasing numbers of "professional revolutionaries" (that is, if we are not so foolish as to advise the workers to keep on marking time).

C. ORGANISATION OF WORKERS AND ORGANISATION OF REVOLUTIONARIES

It is only natural that a Social-Democrat, who conceives the political struggle as being identical with the "economic struggle against the employers and the government," should conceive of an "organisation of revolutionaries" as being more or less identical with an "organisation of workers." And this, in fact, is what actually happens; so that when we talk about organisation, we literally talk in different tongues. I recall a conversation I once had with a fairly consistent Economist, with whom I had not been previously acquainted. We were discussing the pamphlet *Who Will Make the Political Revolution?* and we were very soon agreed that the principal defect in that brochure was that it ignored the question of organisation. We were beginning to think that we were in complete agreement with each other—but as the conversation proceeded, it became clear that we were talking of different things. My interlocutor accused the author of the brochure just mentioned of ignoring strike funds, mutual aid societies, etc.; whereas I had in mind an organisation of revolutionaries as an essential factor in "making" the political revolution. After that became clear, I hardly remember a single question of importance upon which I was in agreement with that Economist!

What was the source of our disagreement? The fact that on questions of organisation and politics the Economists are forever lapsing from Social-Democracy into trade unionism. The political struggle carried on by the Social-Democrats is far more extensive and complex than the economic struggle the workers carry on against the employers and the government.

Similarly (and indeed for that reason), the organisation of a revolutionary Social-Democratic Party must inevitably *differ* from the organisations of the workers designed for the latter struggle. A workers' organisation must in the first place be a trade organisation; secondly, it must be as wide as possible; and thirdly, it must be as public as conditions will allow (here, and further on, of course, I have only autocratic Russia in mind). On the other hand, the organisations of revolutionaries must consist first and foremost of people whose profession is that of a revolutionary (that is why I speak of organisations of *revolutionaries*, meaning revolutionary Social-Democrats). In view of this common feature of the members of such an organisation, *all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals*, and certainly distinctions of trade and profession, must be obliterated. Such an organisation must of necessity be not too extensive and as secret as possible. Let us examine this threefold distinction.

In countries where political liberty exists the distinction between a trade union and a political organisation is clear, as is the distinction between trade unions and Social-Democracy. The relation of the latter to the former will naturally vary in each country according to historical, legal and other conditions—it may be more or less close or more or less complex (in our opinion it should be as close and simple as possible); but trade union organisations are certainly not in the least identical with the Social-Democratic Party organisations in free countries. In Russia, however, the yoke of autocracy appears at first glance to obliterate all distinctions between a Social-Democratic organisation and trade unions, because *all* workers' associations and *all* circles are prohibited, and because the principal manifestation and weapon of the workers' economic struggle—the strike—is regarded as a criminal offence (and sometimes even as a political offence!). Conditions in our country, therefore, strongly “impel” the workers who are conducting the economic struggle to concern themselves with political questions. They also “impel” the Social-Democrats to confuse trade unionism with Social-Democracy (and our Krichevskys, Martynovs and their like, while speaking enthusiastically of the first kind of “im-

pulling," fail to observe the "impelling" of the second kind). Indeed, picture to yourselves the people who are immersed ninety-nine per cent in "the economic struggle against the employers and the government." Some of them have never, *during the whole course of their activity* (four to six months), thought of the need for a more complex organisation of revolutionaries; others, perhaps, come across the fairly widely distributed Bernsteinian literature, from which they become convinced of the profound importance of the forward march of "the drab everyday struggle." Still others are carried away, perhaps, by the seductive idea of showing the world a new example of "close and organic contact with the proletarian struggle"—contact between the trade union and Social-Democratic movements. Such people would perhaps argue that the later a country enters into the arena of capitalism and, consequently, of the labour movement, the more the Socialists in that country may take part in, and support, the trade union movement, and the less reason is there for non-Social-Democratic trade unions. So far, the argument is absolutely correct; unfortunately, however, some go beyond that and hint at the complete fusion of Social-Democracy with trade unionism. We shall soon see, from the example of the rules of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, what a harmful effect these dreams have upon our plans of organisation.

The workers' organisations for carrying on the economic struggle should be trade union organisations; every Social-Democratic worker should, as far as possible, support and actively work inside these organisations. That is true. But it is not in the least in our interest to demand that only Social-Democrats be eligible for membership in the trade unions, for this would only restrict our influence over the masses. Let every worker who understands the need for organisation in order to carry on the struggle against the employers and the government join the trade unions. The very objects of the trade unions would be unattainable unless they were extremely *wide* organisations. The wider these organisations are, the wider our influence over them will be, and this influence will be exercised

not only through the "spontaneous" development of the economic struggle, but also by the direct and conscious effect the Socialist members of the union have on their comrades. But a wide organisation cannot apply the methods of strict secrecy (since the latter demands far greater training than is required for the economic struggle). How is the contradiction between the need for a large membership and the need for strictly secret methods to be reconciled? How are we to make the trade unions as public as possible? Generally speaking, there are perhaps only two ways to this end: either the trade unions become legalised (which in some countries precedes the legalisation of the socialist and political unions), or the organisation is kept a secret one, but so "free" and amorphous, *lose* as the Germans say, that the need for secret methods becomes almost negligible * as far as the bulk of the members is concerned.

The legalisation of the non-socialist and non-political labour unions in Russia has already begun, and there is no doubt that every advance our rapidly growing Social-Democratic working class movement makes will increase and encourage the attempts at legalisation. These attempts proceed for the most part from supporters of the existing order, but they will proceed also from the workers themselves and from the liberal intellectuals. The banner of legality has already been unfurled by the Vassilyevs and the Zubatovs. Support has been promised by the Ozerovs and the Wormses, and followers of the new tendency are to be found among the workers. Henceforth, we must reckon with this tendency. How are we to reckon with it? There can be no two opinions about this among Social-Democrats. We must constantly expose any part played in this movement by the Zubatovs and the Vassilyevs, the gendarmes and the priests, and explain to the workers what their real intentions are. We must also expose the conciliatory, "harmonious" undertones that will be heard in the speeches delivered by liberal politicians at the legal meetings of the workers, irrespective of whether they proceed from an earnest conviction of the desirability of peaceful class collaboration, whether they proceed from a desire to curry favour with the employers, or are simply the result of

clumsiness. We must also warn the workers against the traps often set by the police, who at such open meetings and permitted societies spy out the "hotheads" and who, through the medium of the legal organisations, endeavour to plant their *agents provocateurs* in the illegal organisations.

But while doing all this, we must not forget that *in the long run* the legalisation of the working class movement will be to our advantage, and not to that of the Zubatovs. On the contrary, our campaign of exposure will help to separate the tares from the wheat. What the tares are, we have already indicated. By the wheat, we mean attracting the attention of still larger and more backward sections of the workers to social and political questions, and freeing ourselves, the revolutionaries, from functions which are essentially legal (the distribution of legal books, mutual aid, etc.), the development of which will inevitably provide us with an increasing quantity of material for agitation. In this sense, we may say, and we should say, to the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs: keep at it, gentlemen, do your best! When you place a trap in the path of the workers (either by way of direct provocation, or by the "honest" corruption of the workers with the aid of "Struve-ism"), we shall see to it that you are exposed. But whenever you take a real step forward, even if it is timid and vacillating, we shall say: please continue! And the only step that can be a real step forward is a real, if small, extension of the workers' field of action. Every such extension will be to our advantage and will help to hasten the advent of legal societies, not of the kind in which *agents provocateurs* hunt for Socialists, but of the kind in which Socialists will hunt for adherents. In a word, our task is to fight down the tares. It is not our business to grow wheat in flower-pots. By pulling up the tares, we clear the soil for the wheat. And while the old-fashioned folk are tending their flower-pot crops, we must prepare reapers, not only to cut down the tares of today, but also to reap the wheat of tomorrow.

Legalisation, therefore, will *not solve* the problem of creating a trade union organisation that will be as public and as extensive as possible (but we would be extremely glad if the Zuba-

toys and the Ozerovs provided even a partial opportunity for such a solution—to which end we must fight them as strenuously as possible!). There only remains the path of secret trade union organisation; and *we must* offer all possible assistance to the workers, who (as we definitely know) have already adopted this path. Trade union organisations may not only be of tremendous value in developing and consolidating the economic struggle, but may also become a very important auxiliary to political agitation and revolutionary organisation. In order to achieve this purpose, and in order to guide the nascent trade union movement in the direction the Social-Democrats desire, we must first fully understand the foolishness of the plan of organisation with which the St. Petersburg Economists have been occupying themselves for nearly five years. That plan is described in the “Rules for a Workers’ Benefit Fund” of July 1897 (*Listok Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 46, in *Rabochaya Mysl*, No. 1), and also in the “Rules for a Trade Union Workers’ Organisation,” of October 1900. (Special leaflet printed in St. Petersburg and quoted in *Iskra*, No. 1.) The fundamental error contained in both these sets of rules is that they give a detailed formulation of a wide workers’ organisation and confuse the latter with the organisation of revolutionaries. Let us take the last-mentioned set of rules, since it is drawn up in greater detail. The body of it consists of *fifty-two* paragraphs. Twenty-three paragraphs deal with structure, the method of conducting business and the competence of the “workers’ circles,” which are to be organised in every factory (“not more than ten persons”) and which elect “central (factory) groups.” “The central group,” says paragraph 2, “observes all that goes on in its factory or workshop and keeps a record of events.” “The central group presents to the contributors a monthly report on the state of the funds” (par. 17), etc. Ten paragraphs are devoted to the “district organisation,” and nineteen to the highly complex interconnection between the Committee of the Workers’ Organisation and the Committee of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle (delegates from each district and from the “executive groups”—“groups of propagandists, groups for maintaining contact with

the provinces and with the organisation abroad, and for managing stores, publications and funds").

Social-Democracy = "executive groups" in relation to the economic struggle of the workers! It would be difficult to find a more striking illustration than this of how the Economists' ideas deviate from Social-Democracy to trade unionism, and how foreign to them is the idea that a Social-Democrat must concern himself first and foremost with an organisation of revolutionaries, capable of guiding the *whole* proletarian struggle for emancipation. To talk of "the political emancipation of the working class" and the struggle against "tsarist despotism," and at the same time to draft rules like these, indicates a complete failure to understand what the real political tasks of Social-Democracy are. Not one of the fifty or so paragraphs reveals the slightest glimmer of understanding that it is necessary to conduct the widest possible political agitation among the masses, an agitation that deals with every phase of Russian absolutism and with every aspect of the various social classes in Russia. Rules like these are of no use even for the achievement of trade union aims, let alone political aims, for that requires organisation *according to trade*, and yet the rules do not contain a single reference to this.

But most characteristic of all, perhaps, is the amazing top-heaviness of the whole "system," which attempts to bind every factory with the "committee" by a permanent string of uniform and ludicrously petty rules and a three-stage system of election. Hemmed in by the narrow outlook of Economism, the mind is lost in details which positively reek of red tape and bureaucracy. In practice, of course, three-fourths of the clauses are never applied; on the other hand, however, a "conspiratorial" organisation of this kind, with its central group in each factory, makes it very easy for the gendarmes to carry out raids on a large scale. Our Polish comrades have already passed through a similar phase in their own movement, when everybody was extremely enthusiastic about the extensive organisation of workers' funds; but these ideas were very quickly abandoned when it was found that such organisations only provided rich harvests

for the gendarmes. If we are out for wide workers' organisations, and not for wide arrests, if it is not our purpose to provide satisfaction to the gendarmes, these organisations must remain absolutely loose. But will they be able to function? Well, let us see what the functions are: ". . . to observe all that goes on in the factory and keep a record of events." (Par. 2 of the Rules.) Do we need a special group for this? Could not the purpose be better served by correspondence conducted in the illegal papers and without setting up special groups? ". . . to lead the struggles of the workers for the improvement of their workshop conditions." (Par. 3 of the Rules.) This, too, requires no special group. Any agitator with any intelligence at all can gather what demands the workers want to advance in the course of ordinary conversation and transmit them to a narrow—not a wide—organisation of revolutionaries to be embodied in a leaflet. ". . . to organise a fund . . . to which contributions of two kopeks per ruble¹ should be made" (par. 9) . . . to present monthly reports to the contributors on the state of the funds (par. 17) . . . to expel members who fail to pay their contributions (par. 10), and so forth. Why, this is a very paradise for the police; for nothing would be easier than for them to penetrate into the ponderous secrecy of a "central factory fund," confiscate the money and arrest the best members. Would it not be simpler to issue one-kopek or two-kopek coupons bearing the official stamp of a well-known (very exclusive and very secret) organisation, or to make collections without coupons of any kind and to print reports in a certain agreed code in the illegal paper? The object would thereby be attained, but it would be a hundred times more difficult for the gendarmes to pick up clues.

I could go on analysing the rules, but I think that what has been said will suffice. A small, compact core, consisting of reliable, experienced and hardened workers, with responsible agents in the principal districts and connected by all the rules of strict secrecy with the organisations of revolutionaries, can, with the wide support of the masses and without an elaborate organisation, perform *all* the functions of a trade union organisation.

¹ Of wages earned.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

and perform them, moreover, in the manner Social-Democrats desire. Only in this way can we secure the *consolidation* and development of a *Social-Democratic* trade union movement, in spite of the gendarmes.

It may be objected that an organisation which is so loose that it is not even definitely formed, and which even has no enrolled and registered members, cannot be called an organisation at all. That may very well be. I am not out for names. But this "organisation without members" can do everything that is required, and will, from the very outset, guarantee the closest contact between our future trade unions and socialism. Only an incorrigible utopian would want a *wide* organisation of workers, with elections, reports, universal suffrage, etc., under the autocracy.

The moral to be drawn from this is a simple one. If we begin with the solid foundation of a strong organisation of revolutionaries, we can guarantee the stability of the movement as a whole and carry out the aims of both Social-Democracy and of trade unionism. If, however, we begin with a wide workers' organisation, supposed to be most "accessible" to the masses, when as a matter of fact it will be most accessible to the gendarmes and will make the revolutionaries most accessible to the police, we shall achieve the aims neither of Social-Democracy nor of trade unionism; we shall not escape from our primitiveness, and because we constantly remain scattered and broken up, we shall make only the trade unions of the Zubatov and Ozerov type most accessible to the masses.

What, properly speaking, should be the functions of the organisation of revolutionaries? We shall deal with this in detail. But first let us examine a very typical argument advanced by the terrorist, who (sad fate!) in this matter also is a next-door neighbour to the Economist. *Svoboda* (No. 1), a journal published for workers, contains an article entitled "Organisation," the author of which tries to defend his friends, the Economist workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk. He writes:

"It is bad thing when the crowd is mute and unenlightened, and when the movement does not proceed from the rank and file. For instance, the students of a university town leave for their homes during the summer and other vacations and immediately the workers' movement

comes to a standstill. . . . Can a workers' movement which has to be pushed on from outside be a real force? Of course not! It has not yet learned to walk, it is still in leading strings. So it is everywhere. The students go off, and everything comes to a standstill. As soon as the cream is skimmed—the milk turns sour. If the 'committee' is arrested, everything comes to a standstill until a new one can be formed. And one never knows what sort of committee will be set up next—it may be nothing like the former one. The first preached one thing, the second may preach the very opposite. The continuity between yesterday and tomorrow is broken, the experience of the past does not enlighten the future. And all this is because no deep roots have been struck in the crowd; because, instead of having a hundred fools at work, we have a dozen wise men. A dozen wise men can be caught up at a snap; but when the organisation embraces the crowd, everything will proceed from the crowd, and nobody, however zealous, can stop the cause." (P. 63.)

The facts are described correctly. The above quotation presents a fairly good picture of our primitive methods. But the conclusions drawn from it are worthy of *Rabochaya Mysl* both for their stupidity and their political tactlessness. They represent the height of stupidity, because the author confuses the philosophical and social-historical question of the "depth" of the "roots" of the movement with the technical and organisational question of the best method of fighting the gendarmes. They represent the height of political tactlessness, because the author, instead of appealing from the bad leaders to the good leaders, appeals from the leaders in general to the "crowd." This is as much an attempt to drag the movement back organisationally as the idea of substituting excitative terrorism for political agitation is an attempt to drag it back politically. Indeed, I am experiencing a veritable *embarras de richesses*, and hardly know where to begin to disentangle the confusion *Svoboda* has introduced in this subject. For the sake of clarity, I shall begin by quoting an example. Take the Germans. It will not be denied, I hope, that the German organisations embrace the crowd, that in Germany everything proceeds from the crowd, that the working class movement there has learned to walk. Yet observe how this vast crowd of millions values its "dozen" tried political leaders, how firmly it clings to them! Members of the hostile parties in parliament often tease the Socialists by exclaiming: "Fine democrats you are indeed! Your movement is a working class movement only in name; as a matter of fact, it is the same

clique of leaders that is always in evidence, Bebel and Liebknecht, year in and year out, and that goes on for decades. Your deputies who are supposed to be elected from among the workers are more permanent than the officials appointed by the Emperor!" But the Germans only smile with contempt at these demagogic attempts to set the "crowd" against the "leaders," to arouse bad and ambitious instincts in the former, and to rob the movement of its solidity and stability by undermining the confidence of the masses in their "dozen wise men." The political ideas of the Germans have already developed sufficiently and they have acquired enough political experience to enable them to understand that without the "dozen" tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundred), professionally trained, schooled by long experience and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society is capable of conducting a determined struggle. The Germans have had demagogues in their ranks who have flattered the "hundred fools," exalted them above the "dozen wise men," extolled the "mighty fists" of the masses, and (like Most and Hasselmann) have spurred them on to reckless "revolutionary" action and sown distrust towards the firm and steadfast leaders. It was only by stubbornly and bitterly combating every element of demagoguery within the socialist movement that German socialism managed to grow and become as strong as it is. Our wiseacres, however, at the very moment when Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a crisis entirely due to our lack of sufficient numbers of trained, developed and experienced leaders to guide the spontaneous ferment of the masses, cry out with the profundity of fools, "it is a bad thing when the movement does not proceed from the rank and file."

"A committee of students is no good, it is not stable." Quite true. But the conclusion that should be drawn from this is that we must have a committee of professional *revolutionaries* and it does not matter whether a student or a worker is capable of qualifying himself as a professional revolutionary. The conclusion you draw, however, is that the working class movement must not be pushed on from outside! In your political inno-

cence you fail to observe that you are playing into the hands of our Economists and fostering our primitiveness. I would like to ask, what is meant by the students "pushing on" the workers? *All* it means is that the student brought to the worker the fragments of political knowledge he possesses, the crumbs of socialist ideas he has managed to acquire (for the principal intellectual diet of the present-day student, "legal Marxism," can furnish only the A B C, only the crumbs of knowledge). There has never been too much of *such* "pushing on from outside," on the contrary, so far there has been too little, all too little of it in our movement; we have been stewing in our own juice far too long; we have bowed far too slavishly before the spontaneous "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government." We professional revolutionaries must continue, and will continue, *this kind* of "pushing," and a hundred times more forcibly than we have done hitherto. The very fact that you select so despicable a phrase as "pushing on from outside"—a phrase which cannot but rouse in the workers (at least in the workers who are as ignorant as you yourselves are) a sense of distrust towards *all* who bring them political knowledge and revolutionary experience from outside, and rouse in them an instinctive hostility to such people—proves that you are *demagogues*, and a demagogue is the worst enemy of the working class.

Oh! Don't start howling about my "uncomradely methods" of controversy. I have not the least intention of casting aspersions upon the purity of your intentions. As I have already said, one may become a demagogue out of sheer political innocence. But I have shown that you have descended to demagogy, and I shall never tire of repeating that demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class, because they arouse bad instincts in the crowd, because the ignorant worker is unable to recognise his enemies in men who represent themselves, and sometimes sincerely represent themselves, to be his friends. They are the worst enemies of the working class, because in this period of dispersion and vacillation, when our movement is just beginning to take shape, nothing is easier than to employ demagogic methods

to side-track the crowd, which can realise its mistake only by bitter experience. That is why the slogan of the day for Russian Social-Democrats must be: determined opposition to *Svoboda* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*, both of which have sunk to the level of demagoguery. We shall return to this subject again.¹

"A dozen wise men can be more easily caught than a hundred fools!" This wonderful truth (which the hundred fools will applaud) appears obvious only because in the very midst of the argument you have skipped from one question to another. You began by talking, and continued to talk, of catching a "committee," of catching an "organisation," and now you skip to the question of getting hold of the "roots" of the movement in the "depths." The fact is, of course, that our movement cannot be caught precisely because it has hundreds and hundreds of thousands of roots deep down among the masses; but that is not the point we are discussing. As far as "deep roots" are concerned, we cannot be "caught" even now, in spite of all our primitiveness; but we all complain, and cannot but complain, that the *organisations* are caught, with the result that it is impossible to maintain continuity in the movement. If you agree to discuss the question of catching the *organisations* and to stick to that question, then I assert that it is far more difficult to catch a dozen wise men than it is to catch a hundred fools. And this position I shall defend no matter how much you instigate the crowd against me for my "anti-democratic" views, etc. As I have already said, by "wise men," in connection with organisation, I mean *professional revolutionaries*, irrespective of whether they are trained from among students or workingmen. I assert: 1) that no movement can be durable without a stable organisation of leaders to maintain continuity; 2) that the more widely the masses are spontaneously drawn into the struggle and form the basis of the movement and participate in it, the more necessary is it to have such an organisation, and the more stable must

¹For the moment we shall observe merely that our remarks on "pushing on from outside" and the other views on organisation expressed by *Svoboda* apply *entirely* to *all* the Economists, including the adherents of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, for either they themselves have preached and defended such views on organisation, or have themselves drifted into them,

it be (for it is much easier for demagogues to side-track the more backward sections of the masses); 3) that the organisation must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolutionary activities as a profession; 4) that in a country with an autocratic government, the more we *restrict* the membership of this organisation to persons who are engaged in revolutionary activities as a profession and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to catch the organisation, and 5) the *wider* will be the circle of men and women of the working class or of other classes of society able to join the movement and perform active work in it.

I invite our Economists, terrorists and "Economists-terrorists" ¹ to confute these propositions. At the moment, I shall deal only with the last two points. The question as to whether it is easier to catch "a dozen wise men" or "a hundred fools" reduces itself to the question we have considered above, namely, whether it is possible to have a mass *organisation* when the maintenance of strict secrecy is essential. We can never give a mass organisation that degree of secrecy which is essential for the persistent and continuous struggle against the government. But to concentrate all secret functions in the hands of as small a number of professional revolutionaries as possible does not mean that the latter will "do the thinking for all" and that the crowd will not take an active part in the *movement*. On the contrary, the crowd will advance from its ranks increasing numbers of professional revolutionaries, for it will know that it is not enough for a few students and workingmen, waging economic war, to gather

¹ This latter term is perhaps more applicable to *Svoboda* than the former, for in an article entitled "The Regeneration of Revolutionism" it defends terrorism, while in the article at present under review it defends Economism. One might say of *Svoboda* that "it would if it could, but it can't." Its wishes and intentions are excellent—but the result is utter confusion; and this is chiefly due to the fact that while *Svoboda* advocates continuity of organisation, it refuses to recognise the continuity of revolutionary thought and of Social-Democratic theory. It wants to revive the professional revolutionary ("The Regeneration of Revolutionism"), and to that end proposes, first, excitative terrorism, and secondly, "the organisation of the average worker," because he will be less likely to be "pushed on from outside." In other words, it proposes to pull the house down to use the timber for warming it.

together and form a "committee," but that it takes years to train professional revolutionaries; the crowd will "think" not of primitive ways but of training professional revolutionaries. The centralisation of the secret functions of the *organisation* does not mean the centralisation of all the functions of the *movement*. The active participation of the broad masses in the dissemination of illegal literature will not diminish because a dozen professional revolutionaries centralise the secret part of the work; on the contrary, it will *increase tenfold*. Only in this way will the reading of illegal literature, the contribution to illegal literature and to some extent even the distribution of illegal literature *almost cease to be secret work*, for the police will soon come to realise the folly and futility of setting the whole judicial and administrative machine into motion to intercept every copy of a publication that is being broadcast in thousands. This applies not only to the press, but to every function of the movement, even to demonstrations. The active and widespread participation of the masses will not suffer; on the contrary, it will benefit by the fact that a "dozen" experienced revolutionaries, no less professionally trained than the police, will centralise all the secret side of the work—prepare leaflets, work out approximate plans and appoint bodies of leaders for each urban district, for each factory district and for each educational institution, etc. (I know that exception will be taken to my "undemocratic" views, but I shall reply to this altogether unintelligent objection later on.) The centralisation of the more secret functions in an organisation of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and the quality of the activity of a large number of other organisations intended for wide membership and which, therefore, can be as loose and as public as possible, for example, trade unions, workers' circles for self-education and the reading of illegal literature, and socialist and also democratic circles for *all other sections of the population*, etc., etc. We must have *as large a number as possible* of such organisations having the widest possible variety of functions, but it is absurd and dangerous to *confuse these with organisations of revolutionaries*, to erase the line of demarcation between them, to dim still more the masses' already incredibly

hazy appreciation of the fact that in order to "serve" the mass movement we must have people who will devote themselves exclusively to Social-Democratic activities, and that such people must *train* themselves patiently and steadfastly to be professional revolutionaries.

Aye, this appreciation has become incredibly dim. The most grievous sin we have committed in regard to organisation is that *by our primitiveness we have lowered the prestige of revolutionaries in Russia*. A man who is weak and vacillating on theoretical questions, who has a narrow outlook, who makes excuses for his own slackness on the ground that the masses are awakening spontaneously, who resembles a trade union secretary more than a people's tribune, who is unable to conceive of a broad and bold plan, who is incapable of inspiring even his opponents with respect for himself, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art—the art of combating the political police—such a man is not a revolutionary but a wretched amateur!

Let no active worker take offence at these frank remarks, for as far as insufficient training is concerned, I apply them first and foremost to myself. I used to work in a circle that set itself great and all-embracing tasks; and every member of that circle suffered to the point of torture from the realisation that we were proving ourselves to be amateurs at a moment in history when we might have been able to say, paraphrasing a well-known epigram: "Give us an organisation of revolutionaries, and we shall overturn the whole of Russia!" And the more I recall the burning sense of shame I then experienced, the more bitter are my feelings towards those pseudo-Social-Democrats whose teachings bring disgrace on the calling of a revolutionary, who fail to understand that our task is not to degrade the revolutionaries to the level of an amateur, but to *exalt* the amateur to the level of a revolutionary.

D. THE SCOPE OF ORGANISATIONAL WORK

We have already heard from B——v about "the lack of revolutionary forces fit for action which is felt not only in St. Petersburg, but throughout the whole of Russia." No one, we suppose,

will dispute this fact. But the question is, how is it to be explained? B——v writes:

"We shall not enter in detail into the historical causes of this phenomenon; we shall state merely that a society, demoralised by prolonged political reaction and split by past and present economic changes, advances from its own ranks *an extremely small number of persons fit for revolutionary work*; that the working class does advance from its own ranks revolutionary workers who to some extent reinforce the ranks of the illegal organisations, but that the number of such revolutionaries is inadequate to meet the requirements of the times. This is more particularly the case because the worker engaged for eleven and a half hours a day in the factory is mainly able to fulfil the functions of an agitator; but propaganda and organisation, delivery and reproduction of illegal literature, issuing leaflets, etc., are duties which must necessarily fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely small intelligent force." (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 6, pp. 38-39.)

There are many points in the above upon which we disagree with B——v, particularly with those points we have emphasised, and which most strikingly reveal that, although weary of our primitive methods (as every practical worker who thinks over the position would be), B——v cannot find the way out of this intolerable situation, because he is so ground down by Economism. It is not true to say that society advances few persons from its ranks fit for "work." It advances *very many*, but we are unable to make use of them all. The critical, transitional state of our movement in this connection may be formulated as follows: *there are no people—yet there are enormous numbers of people*. There are enormous numbers of people, because the working class and the most diverse strata of society, year after year, advance from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the fight against absolutism, the intolerableness of which is not yet recognised by all, but is nevertheless more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people. At the same time we have no people, because we have no leaders, no political leaders, we have no talented organisers capable of organising extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would give employment to all forces, even the most inconsiderable. "The growth and development of revolutionary organisations" not only lag behind the growth of the labour movement, which even B——v admits,

but also behind the general democratic movement among all strata of the people (in passing, probably B——v would now admit this supplement to his conclusion). The scope of revolutionary work is too narrow compared with the breadth of the spontaneous basis of the movement. It is too hemmed in by the wretched "economic struggle against the employers and the government" theory. And yet, at the present time, not only Social-Democratic political agitators, but also Social-Democratic organisers must "go among all classes of the population."¹

There is hardly a single practical worker who would have any doubt about the ability of Social-Democrats to distribute the thousand and one minute functions of their organisational work among the various representatives of the most varied classes. Lack of specialisation is one of our most serious technical defects, about which B——v justly and bitterly complains. The smaller each separate "operation" in our common cause will be, the more people we shall find capable of carrying out such operations (people, who, in the majority of cases, are not capable of becoming professional revolutionaries), the more difficult will it be for the police to "catch" all these "detail workers," and the more difficult will it be for them to frame up, out of an arrest for some petty affair, a "case" that would justify the government's expenditure on the "secret service." As for the number ready to help us, we have already referred in the previous chapter to the gigantic change that has taken place in this respect in the last five years or so. On the other hand, in order to unite all these tiny fractions into one whole, in order, in breaking up functions, to avoid breaking up the movement, and in order to imbue those who carry out these minute functions with the conviction that their work is necessary and important, for without this they will never do the work,² it is necessary

¹ For example, in military circles an undoubted revival of the democratic spirit has recently been observed, partly as a consequence of the frequent street fights that now take place against "enemies" like workers and students. And as soon as our available forces permit, we must without fail devote serious attention to propaganda and agitation among soldiers and officers, and to the creation of "military organisations" affiliated to our Party.

² I recall the story a comrade related to me of a factory inspector, who, desiring to help, and while in fact helping Social-Democracy, bitterly

to have a strong organisation of tried revolutionaries. The more secret such an organisation would be, the stronger and more widespread would be the confidence of the masses in the Party, and, as we know, in time of war, it is not only of great importance to imbue one's own army with confidence in its own strength, it is important also to convince the enemy and all *neutral* elements of this strength; friendly neutrality may sometimes decide the issue. If such an organisation existed on a firm theoretical basis, and possessed a Social-Democratic journal, we would have no reason to fear that the movement would be diverted from its path by the numerous "outside" elements that are attracted to it. (On the contrary, it is precisely at the present time, when primitive methods prevail among us, that many Social-Democrats are observed to gravitate towards the *Credo*, and only imagine that they are Social-Democrats.) In a word, specialisation necessarily presupposes centralisation, and in its turn imperatively calls for it.

But B——v himself, who has so excellently described the necessity for specialisation, underestimates its importance, in our opinion, in the second part of the argument that we have quoted. The number of working class revolutionaries is inadequate, he says. This is absolutely true, and once again we assert that the "valuable communication of a close observer" complained that he did not know whether the "information" he sent reached the proper revolutionary quarter; he did not know how much his help was really required, and what possibilities there were for utilising his small services. Every practical worker, of course, knows of more than one case, similar to this, of our primitiveness depriving us of allies. And these services, each "small" in itself, but incalculable when taken together, could be rendered to us by office employees and officials, not only in factories, but in the postal service, on the railways, in the Customs, among the nobility, among the clergy and *every other* walk of life, including even the police service and the Court! Had we a real party, a real militant organisation of revolutionaries, we would not put the question bluntly to every one of these "abettors," we would not hasten in every single case to bring them right into the very heart of our "illegality," but, on the contrary, we would husband them very carefully and would train people especially for such functions, bearing in mind the fact that many students could be of much greater service to the Party as "abettors"—officials—than as "short-term" revolutionaries. But, I repeat, only an organisation that is already established and has no lack of active forces would have the right to apply such tactics.

fully confirms our view of the causes of the present crisis in Social-Democracy, and, consequently, confirms our view of the means for removing these causes. Not only are revolutionaries lagging behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses generally, but even working class revolutionaries are lagging behind the spontaneous awakening of the working class masses. And this *fact* most strikingly confirms, even from the "practical" point of view, not only the absurdity but even the *political reactionariness* of the "pedagogics" to which we are so often treated when discussing our duties to the workers. This fact proves that our very first and most imperative duty is to help to train working class revolutionaries who will be on the same level *in regard to Party activity* as intellectual revolutionaries (we emphasise the words "in regard to Party activity," because although it is necessary, it is not so easy and not so imperative to bring the workers up to the level of intellectuals in other respects). Therefore, attention must be devoted *principally* to the task of *raising* the workers to the level of revolutionaries, and not to *degrading* ourselves to the level of the "labour masses" as the Economists wish to do, or necessarily to the level of the average worker, as *Svoboda* desires to do (and by this raises itself to the second grade of Economist "pedagogics"). I am far from denying the necessity for popular literature for the workers, and especially popular (but, of course, not vulgar) literature for the especially backward workers. But what annoys me is that pedagogics are constantly confused with questions of politics and organisation. You, gentlemen, who are so much concerned about the "average worker," as a matter of fact, rather insult the workers by your desire to *talk down* to them when discussing labour politics and labour organisation. Talk about serious things in a serious manner; leave pedagogics to the pedagogues, and not to politicians and to organisers! Are there not advanced people, "average people," and "masses," among the intelligentsia? Does not everyone recognise that popular literature is required also for the intelligentsia and is not such literature written? Just imagine someone, in an article on organising college or high-school students, repeating over

and over again, as if he had made a new discovery, that first of all we must have an organisation of "average students." The author of such an article would rightly be laughed at. He would be told: give us an organisational idea, if you have one, and we ourselves will settle the question as to which of us are "average," as to who is higher and who is lower. But if you have no organisational ideas *of your own*, then all your chatter about "masses" and "average" is simply boring. Try to understand that these questions about "politics" and "organisation" are so serious in themselves that they cannot be dealt with in any other but a serious way. We can and must *educate* workers (and university and high-school students) so as to enable them to understand us when we speak to them about these questions; and when you do come to us to talk about these questions, give us real replies to them, do not fall back on the "average," or on the "masses"; don't evade them by quoting adages or mere phrases.¹

In order to be fully prepared for his task, the working class revolutionary must also become a professional revolutionary. Hence B——v is wrong when he says that as the worker is engaged for eleven and a half hours a day in the factory, therefore, the brunt of all the other revolutionary functions (apart from agitation) "*must necessarily* fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely small intellectual force." It need not "*necessarily*" be so. It is so because we are backward, because we do not recognise our duty to assist every capable worker to become a *professional* agitator, organiser, propagandist, literature distributor, etc., etc. In this respect, we waste our strength in a positively shameful manner; we lack the ability to husband that which should be tended and reared with special care. Look at the Germans: they have a hundred times more forces than

¹ *Svoboda*, No. 1, p. 66, in the article "Organisation": "The heavy tread of the army of labour will reinforce all the demands that will be advanced by Russian Labour"—Labour with a capital L, of course. And this very author exclaims: "I am not in the least hostile towards the intelligentsia, but" (this is the very word, *but*, that Shchedrin translated as meaning: the ears never grow higher than the forehead!) "but it always frightfully annoys me when a man comes to me, utters beautiful and charming words and demands that they be accepted for their (his?) beauty and other virtues." (P. 62.) Yes. This "always frightfully annoys" me too.

we have. But they understand perfectly well that the "average" does not too frequently promote really capable agitators, etc., from its ranks. Hence they immediately try to place every capable workingman in such conditions as will enable him to develop and apply his abilities to the utmost: he is made a professional agitator, he is encouraged to widen the field of his activity, to spread it from one factory to the whole of his trade, from one locality to the whole country. He acquires experience and dexterity in his profession, his outlook becomes wider, his knowledge increases, he observes the prominent political leaders from other localities and other parties, he strives to rise to their level and combine within himself the knowledge of working class environment and freshness of socialist convictions with professional skill, without which the proletariat *cannot* carry on a stubborn struggle with the excellently trained enemy. Only in this way can men of the stamp of Bebel and Auer be promoted from the ranks of the working class. But what takes place very largely automatically in a politically free country must in Russia be done deliberately and systematically by our organisations. A workingman agitator who is at all talented and "promising" *must not be left* to work eleven hours a day in a factory. We must arrange that he be maintained by the Party, that he may in due time go underground, that he change the place of his activity, otherwise he will not enlarge his experience, he will not widen his outlook, and will not be able to stay in the fight against the gendarmes for at least a few years. As the spontaneous rise of the working class masses becomes wider and deeper, they not only promote from their ranks an increasing number of talented agitators, but also of talented organisers, propagandists and "practical workers" in the best sense of the term (of whom there are so few among our intelligentsia who, in the majority of cases, are somewhat careless and sluggish in their habits, so characteristic of Russians). When we have detachments of specially trained working class revolutionaries who have gone through long years of preparation (and, of course, revolutionaries "of all arms"), no political police in the world will be able to contend against

them, for these detachments of men absolutely devoted and loyal to the revolution will themselves enjoy the absolute confidence and devotion of the broad masses of the workers. The *sin* we commit is that we do not sufficiently "stimulate" the workers to take this path, "common" to them and to the "intellectuals," of professional revolutionary training, and that we too frequently drag them back by our silly speeches about what "can be understood" by the masses of the workers, by the "average workers," etc.

In this, as in other cases, the narrowness of our field of organisational work is without a doubt directly due (although the overwhelming majority of the Economists and the novices in practical work do not appreciate it) to the fact that we restrict our theories and our political tasks to a narrow field. Subservience to spontaneity seems to inspire a fear of taking even one step away from what "can be understood" by the masses, a fear of rising too high above mere subservience to the immediate requirements of the masses. Have no fear, gentlemen! Remember that we stand so low on the plane of organisation that the very idea that we could rise *too high* is absurd!

E. "CONSPIRATIVE" ORGANISATION AND "DEMOCRACY"

There are many people among us who are so sensitive to the "voice of life" that they fear it more than anything in the world and accuse those who adhere to the views here expounded of "Narodovolism," of failing to understand "democracy," etc. We must deal with these accusations, which, of course, have been echoed by *Rabocheye Dyelo*.

The writer of these lines knows very well that the St. Petersburg Economists accused *Rabochaya Gazeta* of being Narodovolist (which is quite understandable when one compares it with *Rabochaya Mysl*). We were not in the least surprised, therefore, when, soon after the appearance of *Iskra*, a comrade informed us that the Social-Democrats in the town of X describe *Iskra* as a Narodovolist journal. We, of course, were flattered by this accusation. What real Social-Democrat has not been accused by the Economists of being a Narodovolist?

These accusations are called forth by a twofold misunderstanding. First, the history of the revolutionary movement is so little known among us that the very idea of a militant centralised organisation which declares a determined war upon tsarism is described as Narodovolist. But the magnificent organisation that the revolutionaries had in the 'seventies, and which should serve us all as a model, was not formed by the Narodovolists but by the adherents of *Zemlya i Volya*,¹ who split up into Chernoperedelists² and Narodovolists. Consequently, to regard a militant revolutionary organisation as something specifically Narodovolist is absurd both historically and logically, because no revolutionary tendency, if it seriously thinks of fighting, can dispense with such an organisation. But the mistake the Narodovolists committed was not that they strove to recruit to their organisation *all* the discontented, and to hurl this organisation into the decisive battle against the autocracy; on the contrary, that was their great historical merit. Their mistake was that they relied on a theory which in substance was not a revolutionary theory at all, and they either did not know how, or circumstances did not permit them, to link up their movement inseparably with the class struggle that went on within developing capitalist society. And only a gross failure to understand Marxism (or an "understanding" of it in the spirit of Struve-ism) could prompt the opinion that the rise of a mass, spontaneous labour movement *relieves* us of the duty of creating as good an organisation of revolutionaries as *Zemlya i Volya* had in its time, and even an incomparably better one. On the contrary, this movement *imposes* this duty upon us, because the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat will not become a genuine "class struggle" until it is led by a strong organisation of revolutionaries.

Secondly, many, including apparently B. Krichevsky (*Rabocheye Dvelo*, No. 10, p. 18), misunderstand the polemics that Social-Democrats have always waged against the "conspirative"

¹ *Land and Freedom*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

² Black Redistributionists, i.e., of the land. See note to page 389 in *Selected Works*, Vol. I.—Ed. Eng. ed.

view of the political struggle. We have always protested, and will, of course, continue to protest against *restricting* the political struggle to conspiracies.¹ But this does not, of course, mean that we deny the need for a strong revolutionary organisation. And in the pamphlet mentioned in the preceding footnote, after the polemics against reducing the political struggle to a conspiracy, a description is given (as a Social-Democratic ideal) of an organisation so strong as to be able to "resort to rebellion" and to "every other form of attack," in order to "deliver a smashing blow against absolutism."² According to its *form* a strong revolutionary organisation of that kind in an autocratic country may also be described as a "conspirative" organisation, because the French word "*conspiration*" means in Russian "conspiracy," and we must have the utmost conspiracy³ for an organisation of that kind. Secrecy is such a necessary condition for such an organisation that all the other conditions (number and selection of members, functions, etc.) must all be subordinated to it. It would be extremely naive indeed, therefore,

¹ Cf. *The Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats*, p. 21, Polemics against P. L. Lavrov. (See *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 495-515.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*)

² *Ibid.* *Apropos*, we shall give another illustration of the fact that *Rabocheye Dyelo* either does not understand what it is talking about, or changes its views "with every change in the wind." In No. 1 of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, we find the following passage in italics: "*The sum and substance of the views expressed in this pamphlet coincide entirely with the editorial programme of 'Rabocheye Dyelo.'*" (P. 142.) Is that so, indeed? Does the view that the mass movement must not be set the primary task of overthrowing the autocracy coincide with the views expressed in the pamphlet, *The Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats*? Do "the economic struggle against the employers and the government" theory and the stages theory coincide with the views expressed in that pamphlet? We leave it to the reader to judge whether an organ which understands the meaning of "coincidence" in this peculiar manner can have firm principles.

³ The Russian word for "conspiracy" is *zagovor*, which means "conspiracy" or "plot." But the word *conspiratsiya*, "conspiracy," in Russian revolutionary literature usually means "secrecy." Hence, a conspirative organisation would be a secret organisation, but would not necessarily engage in plots. Except in this case, when it was important to bring out the play of words, the word "*conspiratsiya*" has been rendered throughout the text as "secrecy," and the word "conspirative" has been used only where the word *zagovor* was used in the text, as in the subtitle of this section.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

to fear the accusation that we Social-Democrats desire to create a conspirative organisation. Such an accusation would be as flattering to every opponent of Economism as the accusation of being followers of Narodovolism would be.

Against us it will be argued: such a powerful and strictly secret organisation, which concentrates in its hands all the threads of secret activities, an organisation which of necessity must be a centralised organisation, may too easily throw itself into a premature attack, may thoughtlessly intensify the movement before political discontent, the ferment and anger of the working class, etc., are sufficiently ripe for it. To this we reply: speaking abstractly, it cannot be denied, of course, that a militant organisation *may* thoughtlessly commence a battle, which *may* end in defeat, which might have been avoided under other circumstances. But we cannot confine ourselves to abstract reasoning on such a question, because every battle bears within itself the abstract possibility of defeat, and there is no other way of *reducing this possibility* than by organised preparation for battle. If, however, we base our argument on the concrete conditions prevailing in Russia at the present time, we must come to the positive conclusion that a strong revolutionary organisation is absolutely necessary precisely for the purpose of giving firmness to the movement, and of *safeguarding* it against the possibility of its making premature attacks. It is precisely at the present time, when no such organisation exists yet, and when the revolutionary movement is rapidly and spontaneously growing, that we *already observe* two opposite extremes (which, as is to be expected, "meet"), *i.e.*, absolutely unsound Economism and the preaching of moderation, and equally unsound "excitative terror," which strives artificially to "call forth symptoms of its end in a movement which is developing and becoming strong, but which is as yet nearer to its beginning than to its end." (V. Zasulich, in *Zarya*, No. 2-3, p. 353.) And the example of *Rabocheye Dyelo* shows that *there are already* Social-Democrats who give way to both these extremes. This is not surprising because, apart from other reasons, the "economic struggle against the employers and the

government" *can never* satisfy revolutionaries, and because opposite extremes will always arise here and there. Only a centralised, militant organisation that consistently carries out a Social-Democratic policy, that satisfies, so to speak, all revolutionary instincts and strivings, can safeguard the movement against making thoughtless attacks and prepare it for attacks that hold out the promise of success.

It will be further argued against us that the views on organisation here expounded contradict the "principles of democracy." Now while the first-mentioned accusation was of purely Russian origin, this one is of *purely foreign* origin. And only an organisation abroad (the League of Russian Social-Democrats) would be capable of giving its editorial board instructions like the following:

"Principles of Organisation. In order to secure the successful development and unification of Social-Democracy, broad democratic principles of Party organisation must be emphasised, developed and fought for; and this is particularly necessary in view of the anti-democratic tendencies that have become revealed in the ranks of our Party." (*Two Congresses*, p. 18.)

We shall see how *Rabocheye Dyelo* fights against *Iskra's* "anti-democratic tendencies" in the next chapter. Here we shall examine more closely the "principle" that the Economists advance. Everyone will probably agree that "broad democratic principles" presuppose the two following conditions: first, full publicity, and second, election to all functions. It would be absurd to speak about democracy without publicity, that is, a publicity that extends beyond the circle of the membership of the organisation. We call the German Socialist Party a democratic organisation because all it does is done publicly; even its Party congresses are held in public. But no one would call an organisation that is hidden from every one but its members by a veil of secrecy, a democratic organisation. What is the use of advancing "*broad* democratic principles" when the fundamental condition for these principles *cannot be fulfilled* by a secret organisation? "Broad principles" turns out to be a resonant but hollow phrase. More than that, this phrase proves that the urgent tasks in regard to organisation are totally mis-

understood. Everyone knows how great is the lack of secrecy among the "broad" masses of revolutionaries. We have heard the bitter complaints of B——v on this score, and his absolutely just demand for a "strict selection of members." (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 6, p. 42.) And people who boast about their "sensitiveness to life" come forward in a situation like this, and urge, not strict secrecy and a strict (and therefore more restricted) selection of members but "*broad* democratic principles"! This is what we call being absolutely wide of the mark.

Nor is the situation with regard to the second attribute of democracy, namely, the principle of election, any better. In politically free countries, this condition is taken for granted. "Membership of the Party is open to those who accept the principles of the Party programme, and render all the support they can to the Party"—says point 1 of the rules of the German Social-Democratic Party. And as the political arena is as open to the public view as is the stage in a theatre, this acceptance or non-acceptance, support or opposition, is known to all from the press and public meetings. Everyone knows that a certain political worker commenced in a certain way, passed through a certain evolution, behaved in difficult periods in a certain way and possesses certain qualities and, consequently, knowing all the facts of the case, *every* Party member can decide for himself whether or not to elect this person for a certain Party office. The general control (in the literal sense of the term) that the Party exercises over every act this person commits in the political field brings into existence an automatically operating mechanism which brings about what in biology is called "survival of the fittest." "Natural selection" of full publicity, the principle of election and general control provide the guarantee that, in the last analysis, every political worker will be "in his proper place," will do the work for which he is best fitted by his strength and abilities, will feel the effects of his mistakes on himself, and prove before all the world his ability to recognise mistakes and to avoid them.

Try to put this picture in the frame of our autocracy! Is it possible in Russia for all those "who accept the principles of the Party programme and render all the support they can to the Party" to control every action of the revolutionary working in secret? Is it possible for all the revolutionaries to elect one of their number to any particular office, when, in the very interests of the work, he *must* conceal his identity from nine out of ten of these "all"? Ponder a little over the real meaning of the high-sounding phrases that *Rabocheye Dyelo* gives utterance to, and you will realise that "broad democracy" in Party organisation, amidst the gloom of autocracy and the domination of gendarme selection, is nothing more than a *useless and harmful toy*. It is a useless toy because, as a matter of fact, no revolutionary organisation has ever practised *broad* democracy, nor could it, however much it desired to do so. It is a harmful toy because any attempt to practise the "broad democratic principles" will simply facilitate the work of the police in making big raids, it will perpetuate the prevailing primitiveness, divert the thoughts of the practical workers from the serious and imperative task of training themselves to become professional revolutionaries to that of drawing up detailed "paper" rules for election systems. Only abroad, where very often people who have no opportunity of doing real live work gather together, can the "game of democracy" be played here and there, especially in small groups.

In order to show how improper *Rabocheye Dyelo's* favourite trick is of advancing the implausible "principle" of democracy in revolutionary affairs, we shall again call a witness. This witness, E. Serebryakov, the editor of the London magazine, *Nakanunye*, has a tender feeling for *Rabocheye Dyelo*, and is filled with hatred against Plekhanov and the Plekhanovists. In articles that it published on the split in the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, *Nakanunye* definitely took the side of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and poured a stream of despicable abuse upon Plekhanov. But this only makes this witness all the more valuable for us on this question. In No. 7 of *Nakanunye* (July 1899), in an article entitled "The Mani-

festo of the Self-Emancipation of the Workers Group," E. Serbryakov argues that it was "indecent" to talk about such things as "self-deception, priority and so-called Areopagus in a serious revolutionary movement," and *inter alia* wrote:

"Myshkin, Rogachev, Zhelyabov, Mikhailov, Perovskaya, Figner and others never regarded themselves as leaders, and no one ever elected or appointed them as such, although as a matter of fact, they were leaders because, in the propaganda period, as well as in the period of the fight against the government, they took the brunt of the work upon themselves, they went into the most dangerous places and their activities were the most fruitful. Leadership came to them not because they wished it, but because the comrades surrounding them had confidence in their wisdom, their energy and loyalty. To be afraid of some kind of Areopagus [if it is not feared, why write about it?] that would arbitrarily govern the movement is far too naive. Who would obey it?"

We ask the reader, in what way does "Areopagus" differ from "anti-democratic tendencies"? And is it not evident that *Rabocheye Dyelo's* "plausible" organisational principle is equally naive and indecent; naive, because no one would obey "Areopagus," or people with "anti-democratic tendencies," if "the comrades surrounding them had" no "confidence in their wisdom, energy and loyalty"; indecent, because it is a demagogic sally calculated to play on the conceit of some, on the ignorance of the actual state of our movement on the part of others, and on the lack of training and ignorance of the history of the revolutionary movement of still others. The only serious organisational principle the active workers of our movement can accept is strict secrecy, strict selection of members and the training of professional revolutionaries. If we possessed these qualities, something even more than "democracy" would be guaranteed to us, namely, complete, comradely, mutual confidence among revolutionaries. And this is absolutely essential for us because in Russia it is useless thinking that democratic control can serve as a substitute for it. It would be a great mistake to believe that because it is impossible to establish real "democratic" control, the members of the revolutionary organisation will remain altogether uncontrolled. They have not the time to think about the toy forms of democracy (democracy within a close and compact body of comrades in which complete, mutual con-

fidence prevails), but they have a lively sense of their *responsibility*, because they know from experience that an organisation of real revolutionaries will stop at nothing to rid itself of an undesirable member. Moreover, there is a fairly well-developed public opinion in Russian (and international) revolutionary circles which has a long history behind it, and which sternly and ruthlessly punishes every departure from the duties of comradeship (and does not "democracy," real and not toy democracy, form a part of the conception of comradeship?). Take all this into consideration and you will realise that all the talk and resolutions about "anti-democratic tendencies" has the fetid odour of the game of generals that is played abroad.

It must be observed also that the other source of this talk, *i.e.*, naiveté, is likewise fostered by the confusion of ideas concerning the meaning of democracy. In Mr. and Mrs. Webb's book on trade unionism,¹ there is an interesting chapter entitled "Primitive Democracy." In this chapter, the authors relate how, in the first period of existence of their unions, the British workers thought that it was an indispensable sign of democracy for all the members to do all the work of managing the unions; not only were all questions decided by the votes of all the members, but all the official duties were fulfilled by all the members in turn. A long period of historical experience was required to teach these workers how absurd such a conception of democracy was and to make them understand the necessity for representative institutions on the one hand, and for full-time professional officials on the other. Only after a number of cases of financial bankruptcy of trade unions occurred did the workers realise that rates of contributions and benefits cannot be decided merely by a democratic vote, but must be based on the advice of insurance experts. Let us take also Kautsky's book on parliamentarism and legislation by the people. There you will find that the conclusions drawn by the Marxian theoretician coincide with the lessons learned from many years of experience by the workers who organised "spontaneously." Kautsky strongly protests against Rittinghausen's primitive conception of

¹ *The History of Trade Unionism.*—Ed. Eng. ed.

democracy; he ridicules those who in the name of democracy demand that "popular newspapers shall be directly edited by the people"; he shows the need for *professional* journalists, parliamentarians, etc., for the Social-Democratic leadership of the proletarian class struggle; he attacks the "socialism of anarchists and *litterateurs*," who in their "striving after effect" proclaim the principle that laws should be passed directly by the whole people, completely failing to understand that in modern society this principle can have only a relative application.

Those who have carried on practical work in our movement know how widespread is the "primitive" conception of democracy among the masses of the students and workers. It is not surprising that this conception permeates rules of organisation and literature. The Economists of the Bernstein persuasion included in their rules the following: "§ 10. All affairs affecting the interests of the whole of the union organisation shall be decided by a majority vote of all its members." The Economists of the terrorist persuasion repeat after them: "The decisions of the committee must be circulated among all the circles and become effective only after this has been done." (*Svoboda*, No. 1, p. 67.) Observe that this proposal for a widely applied referendum is advanced *in addition* to the demand that *the whole of* the organisation be organised on an elective basis! We would not, of course, on this account condemn practical workers who have had too few opportunities for studying the theory and practice of real democratic organisation. But when *Rubochey Dyelo*, which claims to play a leading role, confines itself, under such conditions, to resolutions about broad democratic principles, how else can it be described than as a mere "striving after effect"?

F. LOCAL AND ALL-RUSSIAN WORK

Although the objections raised against the plan for an organisation outlined here on the grounds of its undemocratic and conspirative character are totally unsound, nevertheless, a question still remains which is frequently put and which deserves

detailed examination. This is the question about the relations between local work and all-Russian work. Fears are expressed that the formation of a centralised organisation would shift the centre of gravity from the former to the latter; that this would damage the movement, would weaken our contacts with the masses of the workers, and would weaken local agitation generally. To these fears we reply that our movement in the past few years has suffered precisely from the fact that the local workers have been too absorbed in local work. Hence it is absolutely necessary to shift the weight of the work somewhat from local work to national work. This would not weaken, on the contrary, it would strengthen our ties and the continuity of our local agitation. Take the question of central and local journals. I would ask the reader not to forget that we cite the publication of journals only as *an example*, illustrating an immeasurably broader, more widespread and varied revolutionary activity.

In the first period of the mass movement (1896-98), an attempt is made by local Party workers to publish an all-Russian journal, *Rabochaya Gazeta*. In the next period (1898-1900), the movement makes enormous strides, but the attention of the leaders is wholly absorbed by local publications. If we count up all the local journals that were published, we shall find that on the average one paper per month was published.¹ Does this not illustrate our primitive ways? Does this not clearly show that our revolutionary organisation lags behind the spontaneous growth of the movement? If *the same number* of issues had been published, not by scattered local groups, but by a single organisation, we would not only have saved an enormous amount of effort, but we would have secured immeasurably greater stability and continuity in our work. This simple calculation is very frequently lost sight of by those practical workers who work *actively*, almost exclusively, on local publications (unfortunately this is the case even now in the overwhelming ma-

¹ See *Report to the Paris Congress*, p. 14.* "From that time [1897] to the spring of 1900, thirty issues of various papers were published in various places. . . . On an average, over one number per month was published."

jority of cases), as well as by the publicists who display an astonishing quixotism on this question. The practical workers usually rest content with the argument that "it is difficult" for local workers to engage in the organisation of an all-Russian newspaper, and that local newspapers are better than no newspapers at all.¹ The latter argument is, of course, perfectly just, and we shall not yield to any practical worker in our recognition of the enormous importance and usefulness of local newspapers *in general*. But this is not the point. The point is, can we rid ourselves of the state of diffusion and primitiveness that is so strikingly expressed in the thirty numbers of local newspapers published throughout the whole of Russia in the course of two and a half years? Do not restrict yourselves to indisputable, but too general, statements about the usefulness of local newspapers generally; have the courage also openly to admit the defects that have been revealed by the experience of two and a half years. This experience has shown that under the conditions in which we work, these local newspapers prove, in the majority of cases, to be unstable in their principles, lacking in political significance, extremely costly in regard to expenditure of revolutionary forces, and totally unsatisfactory from a technical point of view (I have in mind, of course, not the technique of printing them, but the frequency and regularity of publication). These defects are not accidental; they are the inevitable result of the diffusion which on the one hand explains the predominance of local newspapers in the period under review, and on the other hand is *fostered by* this predominance. A separate local organisation is *positively unable* to maintain stability of principles in its newspaper and raise it to the level of a political organ; *it is unable* to collect and utilise sufficient material dealing with the whole of our political life. While in politically free countries it is often argued in defence of numerous local newspapers that the cost of printing by local workers is low and that the local popula-

¹ This difficulty is more apparent than real. As a matter of fact, *there is not a single* local circle that lacks the opportunity of taking up some function or other in connection with all-Russian work. "Don't say: I can't; say: I won't."

tion can be kept more fully and quickly informed, experience has shown that in Russia this argument can be used *against* local newspapers. In Russia, local newspapers prove to be excessively costly in regard to the expenditure of revolutionary forces, and *appear very rarely*, for the very simple reason that no matter how small its size, the publication of an *illegal newspaper* requires a large secret apparatus such as requires large factory production; for such an apparatus cannot be created in a small, handicraft workshop. Very frequently, the primitiveness of the secret apparatus (every practical worker knows of numerous cases like this) enables the police to take advantage of the publication and distribution of one or two numbers to make *mass arrests*, which make such a clean sweep that it is necessary afterwards to start all over again. A well-organised secret apparatus requires professionally well-trained revolutionaries and proper division of labour, but neither of these requirements can be met by separate local organisations, no matter how strong they may be at any given moment. Not only are the general interests of our movement as a whole (training of the workers in consistent socialist and political principles) *better served by non-local newspapers*, but so also are even specifically local interests. This may seem paradoxical at first sight, but it has been proved up to the hilt by the two and a half years of experience to which we have already referred. Everyone will agree that if all the local forces that were engaged in the publication of these thirty issues of newspapers had worked on a single newspaper, they could easily have published sixty if not a hundred numbers and, consequently, would have more fully expressed all the specifically local features of the movement. True, it is not an easy matter to attain such a high degree of organisation, but we must realise the need for it. Every local circle must think about it, and *work actively* to achieve it, without waiting to be pushed on from outside; and we must stop being tempted by the easiness and closer proximity of a local newspaper which, as our revolutionary experience has shown, proves to a large extent to be illusory.

And it is a bad service indeed those publicists render to the

practical work who, thinking they stand particularly close to the practical workers, fail to see this illusoriness, and make shift with the astonishingly cheap and astonishingly hollow argument: we must have local newspapers, we must have district newspapers and we must have all-Russian newspapers. Generally speaking, of course, all these are necessary, but when you undertake to solve a concrete organisational problem, surely you must take time and circumstances into consideration. Is it not quixotic on the part of *Svoboda* (No. 1, p. 68), in a special article "dealing with *the question of a newspaper*," to write: "It seems to us that every locality, where any number of workers are collected, should have its own labour newspaper; not a newspaper imported from somewhere or other, but its very own." If the publicist who wrote that refuses to think about the significance of his own words, then at least you, reader, think about it for him. How many scores, if not hundreds, of "localities where any number of workers are collected" are there in Russia, and would it not be simply perpetuating our primitive methods if indeed every local organisation set to work to publish its own newspaper? How this diffusion would facilitate the task of the gendarmes of fishing out—without any considerable effort at that—the local Party workers at the very beginning of their activity and preventing them from developing into real revolutionaries! A reader of an all-Russian newspaper, continues the author, would not find descriptions of the malpractices of the factory owners and the "details of factory life in other towns outside his district at all interesting." But "an inhabitant of Orel would not find it dull reading about Orel affairs. Each time he picked up his paper he would learn that some factory owner had been 'caught' and another 'exposed,' and his spirits would begin to soar." (P. 69.) Yes, yes, the spirit of the Orelia would begin to soar, but the thoughts of our publicist are also beginning to soar—too high. He should have asked himself: is it right to concern oneself entirely with defending the striving after petty reforms? We are second to none in our appreciation of the importance and necessity of factory exposures, but it must be borne in mind

that we have reached a stage when St. Petersburgians find it dull reading the St. Petersburg correspondence of the St. Petersburg *Rabochaya Mysl*. Local factory exposures have always been *and should always continue* to be made through the medium of leaflets, but we must raise the level of the *newspaper*, and not degrade it to the level of a factory leaflet. We do not require "petty" exposures for our "newspaper." We require exposures of the important, typical evils of factory life, exposures based on the most striking facts and capable of interesting *all* workers and all leaders of the movement, capable of really enriching their knowledge, widening their outlook, and of rousing new districts and new professional strata of the workers.

"Moreover, in a local newspaper, the malpractices of the factory officials and other authorities may be seized upon immediately, and they may be caught red-handed. In the case of a general newspaper, however, by the time the news reaches the paper and by the time they are published the facts will have been forgotten in the localities in which they occurred. The reader, when he gets the paper, will say: 'God knows when that happened!'" (*Ibid.*) Exactly! God knows when it happened. As we know from the source I have already quoted, during two and a half years, thirty issues of newspapers were published in six cities. This, on the average, is *one issue per city per half year*. And even if our frivolous publicist *trebled* his estimate of the productivity of local work (which would be wrong in the case of an average city, because it is impossible to increase productivity to any extent by our primitive methods), we would still get only one issue every two months, *i.e.*, nothing at all like "catching them red-handed." It would be sufficient, however, to combine a score or so of local organisations, and assign active functions to their delegates in organising a general newspaper, to enable us to "catch" *over the whole of Russia*, not petty, but really outstanding and typical evils once every fortnight. No one who has any knowledge at all of the state of affairs in our organisations can have the slightest doubt about that. It is quite absurd to talk about an illegal newspaper catching

the enemy red-handed, that is, if we mean it seriously and not merely as a metaphor. That can only be done by a surreptitious leaflet, because an incident like that can only be of interest for a matter of a day or two (take, for example, the usual brief strikes, beatings in a factory, demonstrations, etc.).

"The workers not only live in factories, they also live in the cities," continues our author, rising from the particular to the general, with a strict consistency that would have done honour to Boris Krichevsky himself; and he refers to matters like city councils, city hospitals, city schools, and demands that labour newspapers should not ignore municipal affairs in general. This demand is an excellent one in itself, but it serves as a remarkable illustration of the empty abstraction which too frequently characterises discussions about local newspapers. First of all, if indeed newspapers appeared "in every locality where any number of workers are collected" with such detailed information on municipal affairs as *Svoboda* desires, it would, under our Russian conditions, inevitably degenerate into a striving for petty reforms, would lead to a weakening of the consciousness of the importance of an all-Russian revolutionary attack upon the tsarist autocracy, and would strengthen those extremely virile shoots of the tendency—not uprooted but rather temporarily suppressed—which has already become notorious as a result of the famous remark about revolutionaries who talk a great deal about non-existent parliaments and too little about existing city councils. We say "inevitably" deliberately, in order to emphasise that *Svoboda* obviously does not want this but the contrary to happen. But good intentions are not enough. In order that municipal affairs may be dealt with in their proper perspective, in relation to the whole of our work, this perspective must first be clearly conceived; it must be firmly established, not only by argument, but by numerous examples, in order that it may acquire the firmness of a *tradition*. This is far from being the case with us yet. And yet this must be done *first*, before we can even think and talk about an extensive local press.

Secondly, in order to be able to write well and interestingly about municipal affairs, one must know these questions not only

from books. And there are hardly any Social-Democrats *anywhere in Russia* who possess this knowledge. In order to be able to write in newspapers (not in popular pamphlets) about municipal and state affairs, one must have fresh and multifarious material collected and worked up by able journalists. And in order to be able to collect and work up such material, we must have something more than the "primitive democracy" of a primitive circle, in which everybody does everything and all entertain one another by playing at referendums. For this it is necessary to have a staff of expert writers, expert correspondents, an army of Social-Democratic reporters that has established contacts far and wide, able to penetrate into all sorts of "state secrets" (about which the Russian government official is so puffed up, but which he so easily blabs), find its way "behind the scenes," an army of men and women whose "official duty" it must be to be ubiquitous and omniscient. And we, the party that fights against *all* economic, political, social and national oppression, can and must find, collect, train, mobilise and set into motion such an army of omniscient people—but all this has yet to be done! Not only has not a single step been taken towards this in the overwhelming majority of localities, but in many cases the necessity for doing it is *not even realised*. Search our Social-Democratic press for lively and interesting articles, correspondence, and exposures of our diplomatic, military, ecclesiastical, municipal, financial, etc., etc., affairs and malpractices! You will find *almost nothing*, or very little, about these things.¹ That

¹ That is why even examples of exceptionally good local newspapers fully confirm our point of view. For example, *Yuzhny Rabochy* [Southern Worker] is an excellent newspaper, and is altogether free from instability of principles. But it has been unable to provide what it desired for the local movement, owing to the infrequency of its publication and to extensive police raids. What our Party most urgently requires, at the present time, *viz.*, the presentation of the fundamental questions of the movement and wide political agitation, the local newspaper has been unable to satisfy. And the material it has published exceptionally well, like the articles about the mine owners' congress, unemployment, etc., was not strictly local material, *it was required for the whole of Russia*, and not for the South alone. No articles like that have appeared in any of our Social-Democratic newspapers.

is why "It always frightfully annoys me when a man comes to me and utters beautiful and charming words" about the need for newspapers that will expose factory, municipal and government evils "in every locality where any number of workers are collected"!

The predominance of the local press over the central press may be either a symptom of poverty or a symptom of luxury. Of poverty, when the movement has not yet developed the forces for large-scale production, and continues to flounder in primitive ways and in "the petty details of factory life." Of luxury, when the movement has *already fully mastered the task* of all-sided exposure and all-sided agitation and it becomes necessary to publish numerous local newspapers in addition to the central organ. Let each one decide for himself what the predominance of local newspapers implies at the present time. I shall limit myself to a precise formulation of my own conclusion in order to avoid misunderstanding. Hitherto, the majority of our local organisations have been thinking almost exclusively of local newspapers, and have devoted almost all their activities to these. This is unsound—the very opposite should be the case. The majority of the local organisations should think principally of the publication of an all-Russian newspaper, and devote their activities principally to it. Until this is done, we shall never be able to establish *a single newspaper* capable, to any degree, of serving the movement with *all-sided* press agitation. When it is done, however, normal relations between the necessary central newspapers and the necessary local newspapers will be established automatically.

* * *

It would seem at first sight that the conclusion drawn concerning the necessity for transferring the weight of effort from local work to all-Russian work does not apply to the sphere of the specifically economic struggle. In this struggle, the immediate enemy of the workers is the individual employer or group of employers, who are not bound by any organisation having even the remotest resemblance to the purely militant.

strictly centralised organisation of the Russian government which is guided even in its minutest details by a single will, and which is our immediate enemy in the political struggle.

But that is not the case. As we have already pointed out many times, the economic struggle is a trade struggle, and for that reason it requires that the workers be organised according to trade and not only according to their place of employment. And this organisation by trade becomes all the more imperatively necessary, the more rapidly our employers organise in all sorts of companies and syndicates. Our state of diffusion and our primitiveness hinder this work of organisation, and in order that this work may be carried out we must have a single, all-Russian organisation of revolutionaries capable of undertaking the leadership of the all-Russian trade unions. We have already described above the type of organisation that is desired for this purpose, and now we shall add just a few words about this in connection with the question of our press.

Hardly anyone will doubt the necessity for every Social-Democratic newspaper having a special section devoted to the trade union (economic) struggle. But the growth of the trade union movement compels us to think also about the trade union press. It seems to us, however, that with rare exceptions it is not much use thinking of trade union newspapers in Russia at the present time; that would be a luxury, and in many places we cannot even obtain our daily bread. The form of trade union press that would suit the conditions of our illegal work and is already called for at the present time is the *trade union pamphlet*. In these pamphlets, *legal*¹ and illegal material should

¹ Legal material is particularly important in this connection, but we have lagged behind very much in our ability systematically to collect and utilise it. It would not be an exaggeration to say that legal material alone would be sufficient for a trade union pamphlet, whereas illegal material alone would not be sufficient. In illegal material collected from workers on questions like those dealt with in the publications of *Rabochaya Mysl*, we waste a lot of the efforts of revolutionaries (whose place in this work could very easily be taken by legal workers), and yet we never obtain good material because a worker who knows only a single department of a large factory, who knows the economic results but not the general conditions and standards of his work, cannot acquire the knowledge which is possessed by the office staff of a factory, by inspectors,

be collected and grouped systematically, on conditions of labour in a given trade, on the various conditions prevailing in the various parts of Russia, on the principal demands advanced by the workers in a given trade, on the defects of the laws in relation to that trade, on the outstanding cases of workers' economic struggle in this trade, on the rudiments, the present state and the requirements of their trade union organisations, etc. Such pamphlets would, in the first place, relieve our Social-Democratic press of a mass of trade details that interest only the workers employed in the given trade; secondly, they would record the results of our experience in the trade union struggle, would preserve the material collected—which is now literally lost in a mass of leaflets and fragmentary correspondence—and would generalise this material. Thirdly, they could serve as material for the guidance of agitators, because conditions of labour change relatively slowly and the principal demands of the workers in a given trade hardly ever change (see, for example, the demands advanced by the weavers in the Moscow district in 1885 and in the St. Petersburg district in 1896); a compilation of these demands and needs might serve for years as an excellent handbook for agitators on economic questions in backward localities or among backward strata of the workers. Examples of successful strikes, information about the higher standard of living, about better conditions of labour in one district, would encourage the workers in other districts to take up the fight again and again. Fourthly, having made a start in generalising the trade union struggle, and

doctors, etc., and which is scattered in petty newspaper correspondence, and in special, industrial, medical, *Zemstvo* and other publications.

I very distinctly remember my "first experiment," which I would never like to repeat. I spent many weeks "examining" a workingman who came to visit me, about the conditions prevailing in the enormous factory at which he was employed. True, after great effort, I managed to obtain material for a description (of just one single factory!), but at the end of the interview the workingman would wipe the sweat from his brow, and say to me smilingly: "I would rather work overtime than reply to your questions!"

The more energetically we carry on our revolutionary struggle, the more the government will be compelled to legalise a part of the "trade union" work, and by that relieve us of part of our burden.

having in this way strengthened the contacts between the Russian trade union movement and socialism, the Social-Democrats would at the same time see to it that our trade union work did not take up either too small or too large a part of our general Social-Democratic work. A local organisation that is cut off from the organisations in other towns finds it very difficult, and sometimes almost impossible, to maintain a correct sense of proportion (and the example of *Rabochaya Mysl* shows what a monstrous exaggeration is sometimes made in the direction of trade unionism). But an all-Russian organisation of revolutionaries, that stands undeviatingly on the basis of Marxism, that leads the whole of the political struggle and possesses a staff of professional agitators, will never find it difficult to determine the proper proportion.

V

THE "PLAN" FOR AN ALL-RUSSIAN POLITICAL NEWSPAPER

"THE most serious blunder *Iskra* committed in this connection," writes B. Krichevsky (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 30)—accusing us of betraying a tendency to "convert theory into a lifeless doctrine by isolating it from practice"—"was in promoting its 'plan' for a general Party organisation" (i.e., the article entitled "Where to Begin?") and Martynov echoes this idea by declaring that "*Iskra's* tendency to belittle the forward march of the drab every-day struggle in comparison with the propaganda of brilliant and complete ideas . . . was crowned by the plan for the organisation of a party that it advances in an article in No. 4, entitled 'Where to Begin?'" (*Ibid.*, p. 61.) Finally, L. Nadezhdin recently joined in the chorus of indignation against this "plan" (the quotation marks were meant to express sarcasm). In a pamphlet we have just received written by him, entitled *The Eve of the Revolution* (published by the Revolutionary Socialist group, *Svoboda*, whose acquaintance we have already made), he declares: "To speak now of an organisation linked up with an all-Russian newspaper means propagating armchair ideas and armchair work" (p. 126), that it is a manifestation of "literariness," etc.

It does not surprise us that our terrorist agrees with the champions of the "forward march of the drab every-day struggle," because we have already traced the roots of this intimacy between them in the chapters on politics and organisation. But we must here draw attention to the fact that L. Nadezhdin is the only one who has conscientiously tried to understand the ideas expressed in an article he disliked, and has made an attempt to

reply to the point, whereas *Rabocheye Dyelo* has said nothing that is material to the subject, but has only tried to confuse the question by a whole series of indecent, demagogic sallies. Unpleasant though the task may be, we must first spend some time in cleaning this Augean stable.

B.¹ CAN A NEWSPAPER BE A COLLECTIVE ORGANISER?

The main points in the article "Where to Begin?" deal *precisely* with this question, and reply to it in the affirmative. As far as we know, the only attempt to examine this question and to prove that it must be answered in the negative was made by L. Nadezhdin, whose argument we reproduce in full:

"... The manner in which the question of the need for an all-Russian newspaper is presented in *Iskra*, No. 4, pleases us very much, but we cannot agree that such a presentation fits in with the title of the article 'Where to Begin?' Undoubtedly this is an extremely important matter, but neither a newspaper, nor a whole series of popular leaflets, nor a whole mountain of manifestoes, can serve as the basis for a militant organisation in revolutionary times. We must set to work to build up strong political organisations in the localities. We lack such organisations: we have been carrying on our work mainly among intelligent workers, while the masses have been engaged almost exclusively in the economic struggle. *If we do not build up strong political organisations locally, what will be the use of even an excellently organised all-Russian newspaper?* It will be a burning bush, burning without being consumed, and inflaming nobody. *Iskra* thinks that as a matter of fact people will gather around it, and they will organise. *But they will find it more interesting to gather and organise around something more concrete!* This something more concrete may be the extensive publication of local newspapers, the immediate setting to work to rally the forces of labour for demonstrations, constant work by local organisations among the unemployed (regularly distribute pamphlets and leaflets among them, convene meetings for them, call upon them to resist the government, etc.). We must organise live political work in the localities, and when the time comes to amalgamate on this real basis, it will not be an artificial, a paper amalgamation; it will not be by means of newspapers that such an amalgamation of local work into an all-Russian cause will be achieved!" (*The Eve of the Revolution*, p. 54.)

¹ Section A, entitled "Who Was Offended by the Article 'Where to Begin?'," is omitted from the present edition, as it consists exclusively of polemics against *Rabocheye Dyelo* and the Bund on the alleged attempts of *Iskra* to "command," etc. In this section it is stated *inter alia* that the Bund itself in 1898-99 invited the members of *Iskra* to revive the central organ of the Party and organise a "literary laboratory."—*Ed.*

We have emphasised the passages in this eloquent tirade which most strikingly illustrate the author's incorrect judgment of our plan, and the incorrectness of the point of view, generally, that he opposes to that of *Iskra*. Unless we build up strong political organisations in the localities—even an excellently organised all-Russian newspaper will be of no avail. Absolutely true. But the whole point is that *there is no other way of training* strong political organisations except through the medium of an all-Russian newspaper. The author missed the most important statement *Iskra* made *before it proceeded* to explain its "plan": that it was necessary "to call for the establishment of a revolutionary organisation, capable of combining all the forces and of leading the movement *not only in name but in deed, i.e., an organisation that will be ready at any moment to support every protest and every outbreak*, and to utilise these for the purpose of increasing and strengthening the military forces required for decisive battle." After the February and March events, everyone will agree with this in principle, continues *Iskra*, but we do not need a solution of this problem in principle; *what we need is a practical solution of it*; we must immediately bring forward a definite plan of construction in order that everyone may set to work to build *from every side*. And now we are again being dragged away from a practical solution towards something that is correct in principle, indisputable and great, but absolutely inadequate and absolutely incomprehensible to the broad masses of workers, namely, to "build up strong political organisations"! This is not the point that is now being discussed, most worthy author! The point is, *how to train and what training it should be!*

It is not true to say that "we have been carrying on our work mainly among intelligent workers, while the masses have been engaged almost exclusively in the economic struggle." Presented in such a form, this postulate goes wrong on the point which *Svoboda* always goes wrong on and which is radically wrong, and that is, it sets up the intelligent workers in contrast to the "masses." Even the intelligent workers have been "engaged almost exclusively in the economic struggle" during the past few

years. Moreover, the masses will never learn to conduct the political struggle until we help to *train* leaders for this struggle, both from among the intelligent workers and from among the intellectuals; and such leaders can be trained *solely* by systematic and every-day appreciation of *all* aspects of our political life, of *all attempts* at protest and struggle on the part of various classes and on various grounds. Therefore, to talk about "building up political organisations" and at the same time to *contrast* a "paper organisation" of a political newspaper to "live political work in the localities" is simply ridiculous! Why, *Iskra* has adapted its "plan" for a newspaper to the "plan" for creating a "militant preparedness" to support the unemployed movement, peasant revolts, discontent among the Zemstvo-ists, "popular indignation against the reckless tsarist bashi-bazuks," etc. Everyone who is at all acquainted with the movement knows perfectly well that the majority of local organisations *never even dream* of these things, that many of the prospects of "live political work" here indicated *have never* been realised by a single organisation, that the attempt to call attention to the growth of discontent and protest among the Zemstvo intelligentsia rouses feelings of consternation and amazement in Nadezhdin ("Good Lord, is this newspaper intended for the Zemstvo-ists?"—*Kanun*,¹ p. 129), among the Economists (letter to *Iskra*, No. 12) and among many of the practical workers. Under these circumstances, it is possible to "begin" *only* by stirring up people to *think* about all these things, by stirring them up to summarise and generalise all the signs of ferment and active struggle. "Live political work" can be begun in our time, when Social-Democratic tasks are being degraded, *exclusively* by means of live political education, which is impossible unless we have a frequently issued and properly distributed all-Russian newspaper.

Those who regard *Iskra's* "plan" as a manifestation of "literariness" have totally failed to understand the substance of the plan, and imagine that what is suggested as the most suitable means for the present time is the ultimate goal. These people

¹ *The Eve*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

have not taken the trouble to study the two comparisons that were drawn to illustrate the plan proposed. *Iskra* wrote: the publication of an all-Russian political newspaper must be *the main line* that must guide us in our work of unswervingly developing, deepening and expanding this organisation (*i.e.*, a revolutionary organisation always prepared to support every protest and every outbreak). Pray tell me: when a bricklayer lays bricks in various parts of an enormous structure the like of which has never been seen before, is it "paper" work to use a line to help him find the correct place to put each brick, to indicate to him the ultimate goal of the work as a whole, to enable him to use not only every brick but even every piece of brick which, joining with the bricks placed before and after it, forms a complete and all-embracing line? And are we not now passing through a period in our Party life when we have bricks and bricklayers, but lack the guiding line which all could see and follow? Let them shout that in stretching out the line, we desire to command. Had we desired to command, gentlemen, we would have written on the title page, not "*Iskra*, No. 1" but "*Rabochaya Gazeta*, No. 3," as we were invited to do by a number of comrades, and *as we had a perfect right to do*.* But we did not do that. We wished to have our hands free to conduct an irreconcilable struggle against all pseudo-Social-Democrats; we wanted our line, if properly laid, to be respected because it was correct, and not because it was carried out by an official organ.

"The question of combining local activity in central organs runs in a vicious circle," L. Nadezhdin tells us pedantically, "for this requires homogeneous elements, and this homogeneity can be created only by something that combines; but this combining element may be the product of strong local organisations which at the present time are not distinguished for their homogeneity."

This truism is as hoary and indisputable as the one that says we must build up strong political organisations. And it is equally barren. *Every* question "runs in a vicious circle" because the whole of political life is an endless chain consisting of an infinite number of links. The whole art of politics lies in finding the link that is least likely to be torn out of our hands, the one that

is most important at the given moment, the one that guarantees the command of the whole chain, and having found it, in clinging to that link as tightly as possible. If we possessed a staff of experienced bricklayers, who had learned to work so well together that they could dispense with a guiding line and could place their bricks exactly where they were required without one (and, speaking abstractly, this is by no means impossible), then perhaps we might seize upon some other link. But the unfortunate thing is that we have no experienced bricklayers trained to teamwork, that bricks are often laid where they are not needed at all, that they are not laid according to the general line, and are so scattered about that the enemy can shatter the structure as if it were made not of bricks but of sand.

Here is the other comparison:

"A paper is not merely a collective propagandist and collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. In this respect it *can be compared to the scaffolding* erected around a building in construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour."¹

Does this sound anything like the attempt of an armchair author to exaggerate his role? The scaffolding put up around a building is not required at all for habitation, it is made of the cheapest material, it is only put up temporarily, and as soon as the shell of the structure is completed, is destroyed. As for the building up of revolutionary organisations, experience shows that sometimes they may be built without scaffolding—take the 'seventies for example. But at the present time we cannot imagine that the building we require can be put up without scaffolding.

Nadezhdin disagrees with this, and says: "*Iskra* thinks that as a matter of fact people will gather around it, and they will organise. *But they will find it more interesting to gather and organise around something more concrete!*" So! So! "They will find it more interesting to gather around something more con-

¹ Martynov, quoting the first sentence in this passage in *Rabocheye Deyelo* (No. 10, p. 62), left out the second sentence, as if desiring to emphasise by that either his unwillingness to discuss the essentials of the question, or his incapability of understanding it.

crete. . . ." There is a Russian proverb which says: "Don't spit into the well, you may want to drink out of it." But there are people who do not object to drinking from a well which has been spat into. What despicable things our magnificent, legal "critics of Marxism" and illegal admirers of *Rabochaya Mysl* have said in the name of this—something more concrete! See how restricted our movement is by our own narrowness, lack of initiative and hesitation, and yet this is justified by the traditional argument about finding it "more interesting to gather around something more concrete!" And Nadezhdin—who regards himself as being particularly sensitive to "life," who so severely condemns "armchair" authors, who (with pretensions to being witty) charges *Iskra* with a weakness for seeing Economism everywhere, and who imagines that he stands far above this discrimination between the "orthodox" and the "critics"—fails to see that with this sort of argument he is playing into the hands of the very narrowness with which he is so indignant and that he is drinking from a well that has actually been spat into! The sincerest indignation against narrowness, the most passionate desire to raise those who worship this narrowness from their knees, is insufficient if the indignant one is swept along without sail or rudder as "spontaneously" as the revolutionaries of the 'seventies, and clutches at such things as "excitative terror," "agrarian terror," "sounding the tocsin," etc. Glance at this something "more concrete" around which he thinks it will be "more interesting" to gather and organise: 1) local newspapers; 2) preparations for demonstrations; 3) work among the unemployed. It will be seen at the very first glance that all these have been seized upon at random in order to be able to say something, for however we may regard them, it would be absurd to see in them anything especially adapted for the purpose of "gathering and organising." This very Nadezhdin a few pages further on says: "It is time we simply stated the fact that extremely petty work is being carried on in the localities, the committees are not doing a tenth of what they could do . . . the combining centres that we have at the present time are a pure fiction, they represent a sort of revolutionary bureaucracy, the members

of which mutually appoint each other to the post of generals; and so it will continue until strong local organisations grow up." These remarks, while exaggerating the position somewhat, express many a bitter truth, but cannot Nadezhdin see the connection between the petty work carried on in the localities and the narrow outlook of the Party workers, the narrow scope of their activities, which is inevitable in view of the lack of training of the Party workers isolated in their local organisations? Has he, like the author of the article on organisation published in *Svoboda*, forgotten how the adoption of a broad local press (in 1898) was accompanied by a very strong intensification of Economism and "primitive methods"? Even if a broad local press could be established at all satisfactorily (and we have shown above that it is impossible save in very exceptional cases)—even then the local organs could not "gather and organise" *all* the revolutionary forces for a *general* attack upon the autocracy and for the leadership of a united *struggle*. Do not forget that we are here discussing *only* the "gathering," the organising significance of a newspaper, and we could put to Nadezhdin, who defends diffuseness, the very question that he himself has already put ironically: "Has someone left us a legacy of 200,000 revolutionary organisers?" Furthermore, "preparations for demonstrations" cannot be *opposed* to *Iskra's* plan for the very reason that this plan includes the organisation of the widest possible demonstrations *as one of its aims*; the point under discussion is the selection of the practical *means*. On this point also Nadezhdin has become confused and has lost sight of the fact that only already "gathered and organised" forces can "prepare for" demonstrations (which hitherto, in the overwhelming majority of cases, have taken place quite spontaneously) and we *lack precisely the ability* to gather and organise. "Work among the unemployed." Again the same confusion, for this too represents one of the military operations of mobilised forces and not a plan to mobilise the forces. The extent to which Nadezhdin underestimates the harm caused by our diffuseness, by our lack of "200,000 organisers," can be seen from the following: many (including Nadezhdin) have reproached *Iskra* with the paucity

of the news it gives about unemployment and with the casual nature of the correspondence it publishes about the most common affairs of rural life. The reproach is justified, but *Iskra* is "guilty without sin." We strive to "stretch a line" even through the countryside, but there are almost no bricklayers there, and we are *obliged* to encourage *everyone* to send us information concerning even the most common facts, in the hope that this will increase the number of our contributors in this field and will *train us all* at least to select the really most outstanding facts. But the material on which we can train is so scanty that unless we generalise it for the whole of Russia we shall have very little to train on at all. No doubt one who possesses at least as much capability as an agitator, and as much knowledge of the life of the vagrant as apparently Nadezhdin does, could render priceless service to the movement by carrying on agitation among the unemployed—but such a one would be simply burying his talents if he failed to inform *all* Russian comrades of every step he took in his work, in order that others, who, in the mass, as yet lack the ability to undertake new kinds of work, might learn from his example.

Absolutely everybody now talks about the importance of unity, about the necessity for "gathering and organising," but the majority of us lack a definite idea of where to begin and how to bring about this unification. Probably everyone will agree that if we "unite," say, the district circles in a given city, it will be necessary to have for this purpose *common institutions*, i.e., not merely a common title of "League" but genuinely *common* work, exchange of material, experience and forces, distribution of functions, not only in the given districts but in a whole city, according to special tasks. Everyone will agree that a big secret apparatus will not pay its way (if one may employ a commercial expression) "with the resources" (in material and man power, of course) of a single district, and that a single district will not provide sufficient scope for a specialist to develop his talents. But the same thing applies to the unification of a number of cities, because even such a field, like a single locality, *will prove*, and has already proved in the his-

tory of our Social-Democratic movement, to be too restricted: we have already proved this above, in connection with political agitation and organisational work. We must first and foremost widen the field, establish *real* contacts between the cities on the basis of *regular, common* work; for diffuseness restricts the activities of our people who are "stuck in a hole" (to use the expression employed by a correspondent to *Iskra*), not knowing what is happening in the world; they have no one to learn from, do not know how to obtain or to satisfy their desire to engage in broad activities. And I continue to insist that we can *start* establishing *real* contacts only with the aid of a common newspaper, as a single, regular, all-Russian enterprise, which will summarise the results of all the diverse forms of activity and thereby *stimulate* our people to march forward untiringly along *all* the innumerable paths which lead to revolution in the same way as all roads lead to Rome. If we do not want unity in name only, we must arrange for every local circle *immediately to assign*, say, a fourth of its forces to *active* work for the *common* cause, and the newspaper will immediately convey to them the general design, dimensions and character of this cause, will indicate to them precisely the most serious defects of all-Russian activity, where agitation is lacking and where contacts are weak, and point out which small wheel in the great general mechanism could be repaired or replaced by a better one. A circle that has not yet commenced to work, which is only just seeking work, could then start, not like a craftsman in a small separate workshop unaware of the development that has taken place in "industry" before him, or of the methods of production prevailing in industry, but as a participant in an extensive enterprise that *reflects* the whole general revolutionary attack upon the autocracy. And the more perfect the finish of each little wheel, the larger the number of detail workers working for the common cause, the closer will our network become and the less consternation will inevitable police raids call forth in the general ranks.

The mere function of distributing a newspaper will help to establish *real* contacts (that is, if it is a newspaper worthy

of the name, *i.e.*, if it is issued regularly, not once a month like a magazine, but four times a month). At the present time, communication between cities on revolutionary business is an extreme rarity, and at all events the exception rather than the rule. If we had a newspaper, however, such communication would become the rule and would secure, not only the distribution of the newspaper, of course, but also (and what is more important) an interchange of experience, of material, of forces and of resources. The scope of organisational work would immediately become ever so much wider and the success of a single locality would serve as a standing encouragement to further perfection and a desire to utilise the experience gained by comrades working in other parts of the country. Local work would become far richer and more varied than it is now: political and economic exposures gathered from all over Russia would provide mental food for the workers of all trades and in *all stages of development*, would provide material and occasion for talks and readings on the most diverse subjects, which indeed will be suggested by hints in the legal press, by conversations in society and by "shamefaced" government communications. Every outbreak, every demonstration, would be weighed and discussed in all its aspects all over Russia; it would stimulate a desire to catch up with the rest, a desire to excel (we Socialists do not by any means reject all rivalry or all "competition"!) and consciously to prepare for that which at first appeared to spring up spontaneously, a desire to take advantage of the favourable conditions in a given district or at a given moment for modifying the plan of attack, etc. At the same time, this revival of local work would render superfluous that desperate, "convulsive" exertion of *all* efforts and the risking of *all* men which every single demonstration or the publication of every single number of a local newspaper now entails. In the first place the police would find it much more difficult to dig down to the "roots" because they would not know in what district to seek for them. Secondly, regular common work would train our people to regulate the force of a *given* attack in accordance with the strength of the forces of the given local detach-

ment of the army (at the present time no one ever thinks of doing that, because in nine cases out of ten these attacks occur spontaneously), and would facilitate the "transport" from one place to another, not only of literature, but also of revolutionary forces.

In a great many cases, these forces at the present time shed their blood in the cause of restricted local work, but under the circumstances we are discussing, occasion would constantly arise for transferring a capable agitator or organiser from one end of the country to the other. Beginning with short journeys on Party business at the Party's expense, our people would become accustomed to being maintained by the Party, would become professional revolutionaries and would train themselves to become real political leaders.

And if indeed we succeeded in reaching a point when all, or at least a considerable majority, of the local committees, local groups and circles actively took up work for the common cause we could, in the not distant future, establish a daily newspaper that would be regularly distributed in tens of thousands of copies over the whole of Russia. This newspaper would become a part of an enormous pair of smith's bellows that would blow every spark of class struggle and popular indignation into a general conflagration. Around what is in itself a very innocent and very small, but a regular and *common* cause, in the full sense of the word, an army of tried warriors would systematically gather and receive their training. On the ladders and scaffolding of this general organisational structure there would soon ascend Social-Democratic Zhelyabovs from among our revolutionaries and Russian Bebels from among our workers who would take their place at the head of the mobilised army and rouse the whole people to settle accounts with the shame and the curse of Russia.

That is what we ought to be dreaming about!

* * *

"We ought to be dreaming!" I wrote these words and became alarmed. It seemed to me that I was sitting at a "unity congress"

and that opposite me were the editors and contributors of *Rabocheye Dyelo*. Comrade Martynov rises and, turning to me, says threateningly: "Permit me to enquire, has an autonomous editorial board the right to dream without first obtaining permission of the Party committee?" He is followed by Comrade Krichevsky who (philosophically deepening Comrade Martynov who had long ago deepened Comrade Plekhanov) continues in the same strain even more threateningly: "I go further. I ask, has a Marxist any right at all to dream, knowing that according to Marx man always sets himself achievable tasks and that tactics is a process of growth of tasks, which grow together with the Party?"

The very thought of these menacing questions sends a cold shiver down my back and makes me wish for nothing but a place to conceal myself in. I shall try to conceal myself behind the back of Pisarev.¹

"There are differences and differences," wrote Pisarev concerning the question of the difference between dreams and reality. "My dream may run ahead of the natural progress of events or may fly off at a tangent in a direction in which no natural progress of events will ever proceed. In the first case the dream will not cause any harm; it may even support and strengthen the efforts of toiling humanity. There is nothing in such dreams that would distort or paralyse labour power. On the contrary, if man were completely deprived of the ability to dream in this way, if he could never run ahead and mentally conceive, in an entire and completed picture, the results of the work he is only just commencing, then I cannot imagine what stimulus there would be to induce man to undertake and complete extensive and fatiguing work in the sphere of art, science and practical work. . . . Divergence between dreams and reality causes no harm if only the person dreaming believes seriously in his dream, if he attentively observes life, compares his observations with the airy castles he builds and if, generally speaking, he works conscientiously for the achievement of his phantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well."

Now of this kind of dreaming there is unfortunately too little in our movement. And those most responsible for this are the ones who boast of their sober views, their "closeness" to the "concrete," *i.e.*, the representatives of legal criticism and of illegal "*khvostism*."

¹ Famous literary critic of the sixties of the last century who greatly influenced the Russian radical intelligentsia.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

C. WHAT TYPE OF ORGANISATION DO WE REQUIRE?

From what has been said the reader will understand that our "tactics-plan" consists in rejecting an immediate *call* for the attack, in demanding "a regular siege of the enemy fortress," or in other words, in demanding that all efforts be directed towards gathering, organising and *mobilising* permanent troops. When we ridiculed *Rabocheye Dyelo* for its leap from Economism to shouting for an attack (in *Listok Rabochevo Dyela*, No. 6, April 1901), it of course hurled accusations against us of being "doctrinaire," of failing to understand our revolutionary duty, of calling for caution, etc. Of course we were not in the least surprised to hear these accusations coming from those who totally lack principles and who evade all arguments by references to a profound "tactics-process," any more than we were surprised by the fact that these accusations were repeated by Nadezhdin who in general has a supreme contempt for durable programmes and the fundamentals of tactics.

It is said that history never repeats itself. But Nadezhdin is exerting every effort to cause it to repeat itself and he zealously imitates Tkachev¹ in strongly condemning "revolutionary culturism," in shouting about "sounding the tocsin," about a special "eve of the revolution point of view," etc. Apparently, he has forgotten the well-known epigram which says: if an original historical event represents a tragedy, the copy of it is only a farce. The attempt to seize power, after the ground for the attempt had been prepared by the preaching of Tkachev and carried out by means of the "terrifying" terror which did really terrify, was majestic,² but the "excitative" terror of a little Tkachev is simply ridiculous and is particularly ridiculous when it is supplemented by the idea of an organisation of average workers.

¹ A Russian revolutionary writer of the seventies and eighties of the last century, publisher of the newspaper *Nabat*, *The Tocsin*, in Geneva.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² Lenin refers to the attempt of the Narodovolists to seize power. See article "The Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats" in *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 495-515,—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

"If *Iskra* would only emerge from its sphere of literariness," wrote Nadezhdin, "it would realise that these [the workingman's letter to *Iskra*, No. 7, etc.] are symptoms of the fact that soon, very soon, the "attack" will commence, and to talk now [*sic!*] about organisations linked up with an all-Russian newspaper is simply to give utterance to armchair thoughts and to do armchair work."

What unimaginable confusion this is: on the one hand excitative terror and an "organisation of average workers" accompanied by the opinion that it is "more interesting" to gather around something "more concrete" like a local newspaper—and on the other hand, to talk "now" about an all-Russian organisation means giving utterance to armchair thoughts, or, to speak more frankly and simply, "now" is already too late! But what about the "extensive organisation of local newspapers"—is it not too late for that, my dear L. Nadezhdin? And compare this with *Iskra's* point of view and tactics: excitative terror—is nonsense; to talk about an organisation of average workers and about the *extensive* organisation of local newspapers means opening the door wide for Economism. We must speak about a single all-Russian organisation of revolutionaries, and it will never be too late to talk about that until the real, and not the paper, attack commences.

"Yes, as far as our situation in regard to organisation is concerned, it is far from brilliant," continues Nadezhdin. "Yes, *Iskra* is absolutely right when it says that the mass of our military forces consists of volunteers and insurgents. . . . You do very well in thus soberly presenting the state of our forces. But why in doing so do you forget that *the crowd is not ours*, and, consequently, *it will not ask us* when to commence military operations, it will simply go and 'rebel.' . . . When the crowd itself breaks out with its elemental destructive force it *may* overwhelm and crush the 'regular troops' among whom we had been preparing all the time to introduce extremely systematic organisation, but had never *managed* to do so." (Our italics.)

Astonishing logic! *Precisely because* the "crowd is not ours," it is stupid and reprehensible to call for an "attack" this very minute, because an attack must be made by regular troops and not by a spontaneous outburst of the crowd. It is precisely because the crowd *may* overwhelm and crush the regular troops that we must without fail "manage to keep up" with the spontaneous rise of the masses in our work of "introducing extreme-

ly systematic organisation" among the regular troops, for the more we "manage" to introduce organisation the more probable will it be that the regular troops will not be overwhelmed by the crowd, but will take their place at the head of the crowd. Nadezhdin is confused because he imagines that these systematically organised troops are engaged in something that isolates them from the crowd, when as a matter of fact they are engaged exclusively in all-sided and all-embracing political agitation, *i.e.*, precisely in work that *brings them into closer proximity to, and merges* the elemental destructive force of the crowd with, the conscious destructive force of the organisation of revolutionaries. You, gentlemen, merely wish to throw the blame for your sins on the shoulders of others. For it is precisely the *Svoboda* group that includes terror in its *programme* and by that calls for an organisation of terrorists, and such an organisation would really prevent our troops from coming into proximity to the crowd which, unfortunately, is still not ours, and which, unfortunately, does not yet ask us, or rarely asks us when and how to commence military operations.

"We will miss the revolution itself," continues Nadezhdin in his effort to scare *Iskra*, "in the same way as we missed recent events which hurled themselves upon us like a bolt from the blue." This sentence together with the one quoted above clearly demonstrates the absurdity of the "eve of the revolution point of view" invented by *Svoboda*.¹ To speak frankly, this special "point of view" amounts to this: it is too late "now" to discuss and prepare. If that is the case, oh most worthy opponent of "literariness," what was the use of writing a pamphlet of 132 pages on "questions of theory and tactics"?² Don't you think it

¹ *The Eve of the Revolution*, p. 62.

² In his *Review of Questions of Theory*, L. Nadezhdin made almost no contribution whatever to the discussion of questions of theory apart perhaps from the following passage which appears to be a very peculiar one from the "eve of the revolution point of view": "Bernsteinism, on the whole, is losing its acuteness for us at the present moment, as also is the question as to whether Mr. Adamovich has proved that Mr. Struve has already deserved dismissal, or on the contrary whether Mr. Struve will refute Mr. Adamovich and will refuse to resign—it really makes no difference, because the hour of the revolution has struck." (P. 110.) One

would have been more becoming for the "eve of the revolution point of view" to have issued 132,000 leaflets containing the brief call: "Kill them!"?

Those who place national political agitation at the cornerstone of their programme, *their tactics and their organisational work* as *Iskra* does, stand the least risk of missing the revolution. The people who were engaged over the whole of Russia in weaving a network of organisations to be linked up with an all-Russian newspaper not only did not miss the spring events but, on the contrary, they enabled us to foretell them. Nor did they miss the demonstrations that were described in *Iskra*, Nos. 13 and 14; on the contrary, they took part in those demonstrations, clearly appreciating their duty to come to the aid of the spontaneously rising crowd and, at the same time, through the medium of the newspaper, they helped all the comrades in Russia to become more closely acquainted with these demonstrations and to utilise their experience. And if they live they will not miss the revolution which first and foremost will demand of us experience in agitation, ability to support (in a Social-Democratic manner) every protest, ability to direct the spontaneous movement, and to safeguard it from the mistakes of friends and the traps of enemies!

This brings us to the final argument that compels us to insist particularly upon a plan of organisation that shall be centred around an all-Russian newspaper, to be brought about by means of joint work for a common newspaper. Only such a state of organisation will secure for the Social-Democratic militant organisation the necessary *flexibility*, *i.e.*, the ability to adapt itself immediately to the most diverse and rapidly changing conditions of struggle, the ability, "on the one hand, to

can hardly imagine a more striking illustration of L. Nadezhdin's infinite disregard for theory. We have proclaimed "the eve of the revolution," *therefore*, "it really makes no difference" whether the orthodox Marxists will succeed in driving the critics from their positions or not!! And our wiseacre fails to see that it is precisely in the time of revolution that we stand in need of the results of our theoretical combats with the critics in order to be able resolutely to combat their *practical* positions!

avoid open battle against the overwhelming and concentrated forces of the enemy, and, on the other, to take advantage of the clumsiness of the enemy and attack him at a time and place he least expects attack.”¹ It would be a grievous error indeed to build up the Party organisation in the expectation only of outbreaks and street fighting, or only upon the “forward march of the drab every-day struggle.” We must *always* carry on our every-day work and always be prepared for everything, because very frequently it is almost impossible to foresee when periods of outbreaks will give way to periods of calm. And even in those cases when it is possible to do so, it will not be possible to utilise this foresight for the purpose of reconstructing our organisation, because in an autocratic country these changes take place with astonishing rapidity and are sometimes due merely to a single night raid by the tsarist janizaries. And the revolution itself must not by any means be regarded as a single act (as Nadezhdin apparently imagines) but as a series of more or less powerful outbreaks rapidly alternating with more or less intense calm. For that reason, the principal content of the activity of our Party organisation, the focus of this activity should be, to carry on work that is possible and necessary in the period of the most powerful outbreaks as well as in the period of complete calm, that is to say, work of political agitation linked up over the whole of Russia, that will enlighten all aspects of life and will be car-

¹ *Iskra*, No. 4, “Where to Begin?” “Revolutionary culturists, who do not accept the eve of the revolution point of view, are not in the least disturbed by the prospect of working for a long period of time,” writes Nadezhdin, (P. 62.) On this we shall observe: unless we are able to devise political tactics and an organisational plan based precisely upon calculations for work over a long period of time and at the same time, *in the very process of this work*, put our Party into readiness to spring to its post and fulfil its duty at the very first, even unexpected, call, as soon as the progress of events becomes accelerated, we shall prove to be but miserable political adventurers. Only Nadezhdin, who began to describe himself as a Social-Democrat only yesterday, can forget that the aim of Social-Democracy is radically to transform the conditions of life of the whole of humanity and that for that reason it is not permissible for Social-Democrats to be “disturbed” by the question of the duration of the work.

ried on among the broadest possible strata of the masses. But this work *cannot possibly be carried on* in contemporary Russia without an all-Russian newspaper, issued very frequently. An organisation that springs up spontaneously around this newspaper, an organisation of *collaborators* of this paper (collaborators in the broad sense of the word, *i.e.*, all those working for it) will be ready *for everything*, from protecting the honour, the prestige and continuity of the Party in periods of acute revolutionary "depression," to preparing for, commencing and carrying out the *national armed insurrection*.

Indeed, picture to yourselves a very ordinary occurrence with us—the complete discovery and arrest of our organisation in one or several localities. In view of the fact that *all* the local organisations lack a *single*, common regular task, such raids frequently result in the interruption of our work for many months. If, however, all the local organisations had one common task, then, in the event of a serious raid, two or three energetic persons could in the course of a few weeks establish new youth circles, which, as is well known, spring up very quickly even now, and link them up with the centre, and when this common task, which has been interrupted by the raid, is apparent to all, the new circles could spring up and link themselves up with it even more rapidly.

On the other hand, picture to yourselves a popular uprising. Probably everyone will now agree that we must think of this uprising and prepare for it. But *how* to prepare for it? Surely the Central Committee cannot appoint agents to go to all the districts for the purpose of preparing for the uprising! Even if we had a Central Committee it could achieve nothing by making such appointments, considering the conditions prevailing in contemporary Russia. But a network of agents that would automatically be created in the course of establishing and distributing a common newspaper would not have to "sit around and wait" for the call to rebellion, but would carry on the regular work that would guarantee the highest probability of success in the event of a rebellion. Such work would strengthen our contacts with the broadest strata of the

masses of the workers and with all those strata who are discontented with the autocracy, which is so important in the event of an uprising. It is precisely such work that would help to cultivate the ability properly to estimate the general political situation and, consequently, the ability to select the proper moment for the uprising. It is precisely such work that would train *all* local organisations to respond simultaneously to the same political questions, incidents and events that excite the whole of Russia, to react to these "events" in the most vigorous, uniform and expedient manner possible; for is not rebellion in essence the most vigorous, most uniform and most expedient "reaction" of the whole of the people to the conduct of the government? And finally, such work would train all revolutionary organisations all over Russia to maintain the most continuous, and at the same time the most secret, contact with each other, which would create *real* Party unity—for without such contacts it will be impossible collectively to discuss the plan of rebellion and to take the necessary preparatory measures on the eve of it, which must be kept in the strictest secrecy.

In a word, the "plan for an all-Russian political newspaper" does not represent the fruits of the work of armchair workers, infected with dogmatism and literariness (as it seemed to those who failed to study it properly), on the contrary, it is a practical plan to begin immediately to prepare on all sides for the uprising, while at the same time never for a moment forgetting the ordinary, every-day work.

CONCLUSION

THE history of Russian Social-Democracy can be divided into three distinct periods:

The first period covers about ten years, approximately the years 1884 to 1894. This was the period of the rise and consolidation of the theory and programme of Social-Democracy. The number of adherents of the new tendency in Russia could be counted in units. Social-Democracy existed without a labour movement; it was, as it were, in its period of gestation.

The second period covers three or four years—1894-98. In this period Social-Democracy appeared in the world as a social movement, as the rising of the masses of the people, as a political party. This is the period of its childhood and adolescence. The fight against Narodism and going among the workers infected the intelligentsia wholesale like an epidemic, and the workers were equally infected by strikes. The movement made enormous strides. The majority of the leaders were very young people who had by no means reached the "age of thirty-five" which to N. Mikhailovsky appears to be a sort of natural borderline. Owing to their youth, they proved to be untrained for practical work and they left the scene with astonishing rapidity. But in the majority of cases the scope of their work was extremely wide. Many of them began their revolutionary thinking as Narodovolists. Nearly all of them in their early youth enthusiastically worshipped the terrorist heroes. It was a great wrench to abandon the captivating impressions of these heroic traditions and it was accompanied by the breaking off of personal relationships with people who were determined to remain loyal to *Narodnaya Volya* and for whom the young Social-Democrats had profound respect. The struggle compelled

them to educate themselves, to read the illegal literature of all tendencies and to study closely the questions of legal Narodism. Trained in this struggle, Social-Democrats went into the labour movement without "for a moment" forgetting the theories of Marxism which illumined their path or the task of overthrowing the autocracy. The formation of the Party in the spring of 1898¹ was the most striking and at the same time the *last* act of the Social-Democrats in this period.

The third period, as we have seen, began in 1897 and definitely replaced the second period in 1898 (1898.—?). This was the period of dispersion, dissolution and vacillation. In the period of adolescence the youth's voice breaks. And so, in this period, the voice of Russian Social-Democracy began to break, began to strike a false note—on the one hand, in the productions of Messrs. Struve and Prokopovich, Bulgakov and Berdyaev, on the other hand, in the productions of V. I.—n and R. M., B. Krichevsky and Martynov. But it was only the leaders who wandered about separately and went back; the movement itself continued to grow, and it advanced with enormous strides. The proletarian struggle spread to new strata of the workers over the whole of Russia and at the same time indirectly stimulated the revival of the democratic spirit among the students and among other strata of the population. The consciousness of the leaders, however, yielded to the breadth and power of the spontaneous rising; among Social-Democrats, a different streak predominated—a streak of Party workers who had been trained almost exclusively on "legal Marxian" literature, and the more the spontaneity of the masses called for consciousness, the more the inadequacy of this literature was felt. The leaders not only lagged behind in regard to theory ("freedom of criticism") and practice ("primitiveness"), but even tried to justify their backwardness by all sorts of high-flown arguments. Social-Democracy was degraded to the level of trade unionism in legal literature by the Brentano-ists and in illegal literature by the *khvostists*. The programme of the *Credo* began to be put into

¹The First Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party was held in March of that year.—*Ed.*

operation, especially when the "primitiveness" of the Social-Democrats caused a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary tendencies.

And if the reader reproaches me for having dealt in excessive detail with a certain *Rabocheye Dyelo*, I shall say to him in reply: *Rabocheye Dyelo* acquired "historical" significance because it most strikingly reflected the "spirit" of this third period.¹ It was not the consistent R. M. but the weathercock Krichevskys and Martynovs who could properly express the confusion and vacillation, and the readiness to make concessions to "criticism," to "Economism" and to terrorism. It is not the lofty contempt for practical work displayed by the worshippers of the "absolute" that is characteristic of this period, but the combination of pettifogging practice and utter disregard for theory. It was not so much the downright rejection of "grand phrases" that the heroes of this period engaged in as in the vulgarisation of these phrases: scientific socialism ceased to be an integral revolutionary theory and became a hodge-podge idea "freely" diluted with the contents of every new German textbook that appeared; the slogan "class struggle" did not impel them forward to wider and more strenuous activity but served as a soothing syrup, because the "economic struggle is inseparably linked up with the political struggle"; the idea of a party did not serve as a call for the creation of a militant organisation of revolutionaries, but was used to justify some sort of a "revolutionary bureaucracy" and infantile playing at "democratic" forms.

When this third period will come to an end and the fourth begin we do not know (at all events it is already heralded by many signs). We are passing from the sphere of history to the sphere of the present and partly to the sphere of the future. But we firmly believe that the fourth period will see the

¹I could also reply with the German proverb: *Den Sack schlägt man, den Esel meint man* (you beat the sack, but the blows are intended for the ass). It was not *Rabocheye Dyelo* alone that was carried away by the fashion of "criticism" but also the masses of practical workers and theoreticians; they became confused on the question of spontaneity and strayed from the Social-Democratic to the trade union conception of our political and organisational tasks.

consolidation of militant Marxism, that Russian Social-Democracy will emerge from the crisis in the full strength of manhood, that the place of the rearguard of opportunists will be taken by a genuine vanguard of the most revolutionary class.

In the sense of calling for such a "new guard" and summing up, as it were, all that has been expounded above, my reply to the question: "What is to be done?" can be put briefly: Liquidate the Third Period.

1901-02.

WHY THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS MUST DECLARE DETERMINED AND RELENTLESS WAR ON THE SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONARIES *

1) BECAUSE that trend of political thought in Russia which goes by the name "Socialist-Revolutionary" has actually been moving away from the only international theory of revolutionary socialism there is today, i.e., from Marxism. In the great split of international Social-Democracy into an opportunist ("Bernsteinian") and a revolutionary wing, this tendency has taken up a very indefinite and inadmissible half-way position between two stools; basing itself on nothing but the bourgeois and opportunist criticisms of Marxism, it has pronounced the latter to have been "shaken" (*Vestnik Russkoy Revolyutsii*,¹ No. 2, p. 62); it has promised to "revise" Marxism in its own way, but it has failed to do anything whatever to fulfil this threatening promise.

2) Because the Socialist-Revolutionaries helplessly yield to that dominant tendency in Russian social and political thought, which should be defined as liberal Narodism. Repeating the error of *Narodnaya Volya* and of old Russian socialism in general, the Socialist-Revolutionaries fail to see the absolute flabbiness and the internal contradictions of this tendency; their only independent contribution in the domain of Russian revolutionary thought has been to tack on a revolutionary phrase to the old testament of liberal Narodnik wisdom. Russian Marxism was the first to undermine the theoretical foundations of liberal Narodism, to lay bare its bourgeois and petty-bourgeois class content and to declare and wage war against it undeterred by the desertion of a whole swarm of critical (opportunist) Marxists to the enemy camp. But the position which the Socialist-Revolutionaries have been occupying in this war is (*at best*) one

¹ *Messenger of the Russian Revolution*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

of hostile neutrality, for here again they have seated themselves between two stools, between Russian Marxism (from which they have only borrowed some miserable shreds) and the quasi-socialist liberal Narodism.

3) Because, as has been pointed out, completely lacking principles in questions of international and Russian socialism, the Socialist-Revolutionaries neither understand nor recognise the only really revolutionary principle, viz., the class struggle. They do not understand that in the Russia of today only that party can be really revolutionary and truly socialist which *fuses* socialism with the *Russian working class movement* that is being generated with increasing force and on an increasing scale by the growth of Russian capitalism. The attitude of the Socialist-Revolutionaries towards the Russian working class movement has always been that of spectators and dilettantes, and when, for instance (as a consequence of its amazingly rapid growth), that movement fell ill with Economism, the Socialist-Revolutionaries exulted over the mistakes of people who were working at the new and difficult task of rousing the masses of the workers; and when the revolutionary Marxists started and victoriously carried through the fight against this Economism, the Socialist-Revolutionaries only put spokes in their wheel. The inevitable result of their lukewarm attitude to the working class movement is that in practice they stand aloof from it, with the result that the Socialist-Revolutionary Party lacks a social basis. It does not rely upon any social class, for the term class cannot be applied to the group of shifting intelligentsia which calls its vagueness and lack of principles "broadness."

4) Because the Socialist-Revolutionary Party assumes a disdainful attitude towards socialist ideology and wants to take its stand simultaneously and in an equal measure on the intelligentsia, on the proletariat and on the peasantry, and therefore inevitably (whether it wants to or not) opens the way for the political and intellectual enslavement of the Russian proletariat to Russian bourgeois democracy. A disdainful attitude towards theory, an evasive and wriggling attitude towards socialist ideo-

logy, inevitably plays into the hands of bourgeois ideology. The Russian intelligentsia and the Russian peasantry, as social strata that can be *juxtaposed* to the proletariat, can only be the support of a *bourgeois-democratic* movement. This is not only an argument that follows imperatively from our teachings as a whole (which regard the small producer, for instance, as revolutionary only to the extent that he breaks off all connection with commodity economy and capitalism and embraces the point of view of the proletariat)—no, it is also an obvious fact, which is already beginning to make itself felt. At the moment of the political revolution and on the morrow of the revolution this fact will make itself felt with still greater force. Socialist-Revolutionarism is one of the manifestations of petty-bourgeois instability of ideas with which Social-Democracy must and will always wage determined war.

5) Because all the practical demands of the programme which the Socialist-Revolutionaries have, I won't say advanced, but only outlined, have abundantly revealed the enormous harm which the absence of principles in their movement has caused. For example, their agrarian minimum programme sketched in No. 8 of *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* (perhaps it would be more correct to say: scattered among the hackneyed premises of our Narodism) misleads the peasantry by promising them socialisation of land as a "minimum" and misleads the working class by giving it an entirely wrong impression of the real character of the peasant movement. Such frivolous promises only compromise a revolutionary party in general, and in particular they compromise the doctrine of scientific socialism concerning the socialisation of all means of production as our final object. Secondly, by including in their minimum programme the support and development of co-operation, the Socialist-Revolutionaries abandon the ground of the revolutionary struggle and degrade their would-be socialism to the level of the most banal petty-bourgeois reformism. Thirdly, the Socialist-Revolutionaries oppose the demand of the Social-Democrats for the abolition of all the mediæval fetters that bind our village community, keep the peasant attached to his holding, deprive him of the freedom of

movement and inevitably determine the legal inferiority of his civil status; and by doing so they have shown that they have not been able even to safeguard themselves from the reactionary doctrines of Russian Narodism.

6) Because the Socialist-Revolutionaries have included terrorism in their programme, preaching it in its modern form as a method of political struggle, and have thus done (the most) serious harm to the movement by destroying the indissoluble connection between socialist work and the mass of the revolutionary class. No verbal assurances or invocations can disprove the unquestionable fact that modern terrorism as it is practised and preached by the Socialist-Revolutionaries is not in any way linked with work among the masses, for the masses and together with the masses; that the organisation of terroristic acts by the Party distracts the very scanty organisational forces we have from their difficult and by no means completed task of organising a revolutionary *workers'* party; that *in practice* the terrorism of the Socialist-Revolutionaries is nothing more than fighting in *single combat*, the sort of fighting that has been wholly condemned by the experience of history. Even foreign Socialists are beginning to be troubled by the noisy preaching of terrorism carried on today by our Socialist-Revolutionaries. Among the masses of the Russian workers their preaching simply serves to sow harmful illusions, such as the idea that terrorism "compels people to think politically even against their will" (*Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya*, No. 7, p. 4), or that it "is capable of changing the opinions of thousands of people about revolutionaries and the meaning [!!] of their activity better than months of oral propaganda," or that it is capable of "infusing new strength into those who vacillate, who have lost courage, who have been painfully struck by the sad outcome of many demonstrations" (*ibid.*), and so on. These harmful illusions can only result in early disappointment and slacken the work of preparing for the mass attack upon the autocracy.

VULGAR SOCIALISM AND NARODISM REVIVED BY THE SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONARIES

RIDICULE has a good effect. In a series of articles entitled "Revolutionary Adventurism," we expressed the firm conviction that our Socialist-Revolutionaries would never agree to state their theoretical position in unambiguous and precise terms. To refute so malignant and unjust a suggestion *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* in No. 11 starts a series of articles under the title "Questions of Programme." God speed them! Better late than never. We welcome beforehand all the articles of *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* on "programme questions" and we promise to watch very attentively to see whether it will actually be possible to extract any *programme* from them.

For this purpose, let us look a little more closely into the first article, "The Class Struggle in the Village," but let us first make the remark that when our opponents say (No. 11, p. 6) "our programme has been stated," they are once more being unduly . . . "carried away." You know very well, my dear sirs, that this is not true. You have not yet stated any programme, in other words, you have not only failed to produce a complete exposition of your views officially endorsed by the Party (a programme in the strict sense of the word, or at any rate a draft programme), you have not even defined your attitude towards such fundamental "programme questions" as the question of Marxism and of its opportunist criticism, or the question of Russian capitalism, and of the position, significance and tasks of the proletariat which is generated by capitalism, and so on. All we know of your programme is that you occupy an altogether indefinite position *between* revolutionary Social-Democracy and the opportunist tendency on the one hand, and *between* Russian Marxism and Russian liberal Narodism on the other.

We shall proceed to show, taking the issue you have chosen, the sort of insoluble contradictions you get entangled in, as a result of trying to sit between two stools. "It is not that we are unable to understand that the peasantry of today as a whole belongs to the petty-bourgeois strata, we simply deny this," writes *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*. (No. 11.) "We regard the peasantry as being sharply divided into two fundamentally different categories: 1) the toiling peasantry which lives by the exploitation of its own labour power [!??] and 2) the rural bourgeoisie—middle and small—which to a greater or lesser extent lives by the exploitation of the labour power of others." The Socialist-Revolutionary theoreticians, who consider the "source of income" (utilising the unpaid labour of others) as the "essential distinguishing feature" of the bourgeois class, discover "an enormous fundamental similarity" between the rural proletariat and the "independent farmers" who live by applying their own labour to the means of production. "The basis of the existence of both groups is *labour*, as a definite category of political economy. This is one point. Another is that under present conditions both are *mercilessly exploited*. Consequently, they must be put into a *single* category, that of the toiling peasantry."

We have deliberately presented the arguments of *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* in such detail in order to enable the reader to ponder over them and to appreciate their theoretical premises. That these are unsatisfactory is obvious. To look for the fundamental distinguishing feature of various classes in society in their source of income is to give precedence to relations of distribution, which in reality are only a consequence of relations of production. This error was long ago pointed out by Marx, who described those who were unable to see it as vulgar Socialists. The fundamental feature that distinguishes classes is the place they occupy in social production, and, consequently, the relation in which they stand to the means of production. The appropriation of a part of the social means of production and their application to private enterprise, enterprises organised for the sale of the product, is the fundamental feature that distin-

guishes one class in modern society (the bourgeoisie) from the proletariat, which is deprived of all means of production and sells its labour power.

To proceed: "The basis of the existence of both groups is *labour*, as a definite category of political economy." It is not labour that is a definite category of political economy, but the social form of labour, the social organisation of labour, or in other words, the mutual relations of people arising out of the part they play in social labour. The same mistake of vulgar socialism which we have analysed is repeated here in another form. When the Socialist-Revolutionaries say: "Essentially—the relations between farmer and farmhand, on the one hand, and between independent peasants and the money lenders, the kulaks, on the other, are exactly the same," they reproduce wholesale the mistake of German vulgar socialism, which, in the person, for example, of Mühlberger, stated that essentially the relation of employer to worker is the same as that of landlord to tenant. Our own Mühlbergers are equally incapable of distinguishing between the basic and the derivative forms of exploitation, and only declaim on the subject of "exploitation" in general. Our Mühlbergers are equally incapable of understanding that it is precisely the exploitation of wage-labour that forms the basis of the whole robber order of today, that it is wage-labour that leads to the division of society into irreconcilably hostile classes, and that it is only from the point of view of *this* class struggle that all the other manifestations of exploitation may be consistently gauged, without becoming vague and devoid of principle. Russian Socialists who attach any value to the integrity of their movement and the "good name" of their revolutionary banner must give our Mühlbergers a rebuff as merciless as was given the German Mühlberger.

To give a clearer idea of how muddle-headed the "theory" of our Socialist-Revolutionaries is, we shall approach the same question from the practical side and try to illustrate it by concrete examples. In the first place, everywhere and always the great majority of the petty bourgeoisie *toils* and is exploited. Otherwise why should it be included in the transitional and

intermediate strata? In the second place, in a commodity producing society small tradesmen and artisans *toil* and are exploited in exactly the same way as the peasants. Are our Socialist-Revolutionaries going to create a "category" of "toilers" in trade and industry to replace the "narrow" category of the proletariat? Thirdly, in order that the Socialist-Revolutionaries may appreciate the importance of the "dogma" they dislike so much, let them try to visualise a suburban peasant who, without employing any labourers, lives by his own labour and by the sale of agricultural produce. May we not hope that even the most ardent Narodniki will not dare deny that *this* sort of peasant belongs to the petty bourgeoisie and that it is impossible to "unite" him in the same *class* (mark you, we are talking of classes and not parties) as the wage labourers? But is there any difference in principle between the position of a suburban farmer who sells his goods and that of any small farmer in a society where commodity economy is developing?

We must now ask, how are we to account for the gentlemen of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party coming so near (to put it mildly) to vulgar socialism? May it not be the accidental peculiarity of this particular writer? To refute this supposition it is sufficient to quote the following passage from No. 11 of *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* where the writer exclaims: "As if it were all a matter of the size of one and the same economic category" (big and petty bourgeois) "and not of the difference in principle" (hear! hear!) "of two categories, *viz.*, labour economy and bourgeois capitalist economy." It would be difficult to imagine a more complete and obvious confirmation of what we said in our article "Revolutionary Adventurism": scratch a Socialist-Revolutionary and you will find Mr. V. V. One such phrase is enough to explain the position of the Socialist-Revolutionaries to anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the evolution of Russian social and political thought. We know that the basis of the pale pink quasi-socialism which used to embellish (and still embellishes) the liberal Narodism which is the prevailing creed in our educated society is the conception that peasant "labour economy" and bourgeois

economy are direct opposites. These ideas, the various shades of which have been elaborated in detail by Messrs. Mikhailovsky, V.V., N—on and others, were one of the strongholds against which Russian Marxism directed its criticism. If, we said, you want to help the peasant who is being ruined and oppressed, you must be able to abandon illusions and to look in the face of the reality that is destroying all the nebulous dreams about labour economy (or is it “people’s production”?) and laying bare the *petty-bourgeois character* of peasant economy. In Russia, as everywhere else, small labour economy can develop and become strong only by being transformed into petty-bourgeois economy. This transformation is actually in progress and the true and real tendency of the working peasant towards becoming a small employer has been irrefutably confirmed by facts. To the extent that commodity production is developing, our peasants, like all small producers and by the very fact of their being that, come under the category of petty bourgeois; they are becoming split into a minority of employers and a mass of proletarians, the latter being connected with the “small owners” by a whole chain of transitional stages of semi-workers and semi-owners (these transitional forms exist in all capitalist countries and in all branches of industry).

What then has been the attitude of the Socialist-Revolutionaries towards the supplanting of one school of socialist thought by another, towards the struggle between early Russian socialism¹ and Marxism? They simply tried to evade examining the essence of the question as long as they could. And when this was no longer possible, when these people who wanted to form a separate “party” were asked to explain themselves clearly, when they were forced to give an answer, forced by derision and by a direct charge of lack of principle, they did nothing but repeat the old Narodnik theory of “labour economy” and the old errors of vulgar socialism. We repeat: we could not have wished for better confirmation of the charge we brought against the Socialist-Revolutionaries, *viz.*, of utterly lacking principles.

¹ *I.e.*, the revolutionary Narodism of the 1870’s and 1880’s. — *Ed.*

than this article in No. 11 which attempts to "unite" the theory of "labour economy" with the theory of the class struggle.

* * *

As a curiosity, we will add that in No. 11 of *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* attempts are made to give a "becoming" explanation of their decision to evade all polemics on matters of principle. We are told that in its article "Revolutionary Adventurism," *Iskra* misquotes. For example? For example, it omits the words "in certain places" (in certain places land passes from capital to labour). How dreadful! An irrelevant phrase has been omitted. Or, perhaps, *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* will dare assert that the words "in certain places" have *even the slightest* relation to the question of *appraising* the process of the land changing hands *in general* (whether or not it is a bourgeois process)? Let it try.

Further, *Iskra* stopped the quotation at the words "by the state," although this is followed by "of course, not the present state." *Iskra*, we will add, was even more cruel; it had the impudence to describe the state as a *class* state. Will our opponents who "have been dreadfully hurt" assert that the state of which the "minimum programme" speaks is *not* a class state?

Finally, *Iskra* quoted the Manifesto of April 16 (3) in which, even in the opinion of *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* itself, the importance of terrorism was exaggerated. Yes, we *did* quote the reservation made by *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya*, but we added that we thought all this was mere "tight-rope walking" and dark hints. *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* was greatly displeased by this, and has set out to explain and to quote details (thus confirming, *in practice*, that there was obscurity which demanded elucidation). What are its explanations like? At the demand of the Party, you see, *amendments* were made in the Manifesto of April 16 (3). The amendments, however, "were recognised to be inadequate," and for that reason the words "in the name of the Party" were deleted from the Manifesto. But the words "published by the Party" remained, and the second ("the real") manifesto, which was brought out on the same date, April 16

(3), says not a word about any dissensions or exaggeration. After giving these explanations and realising that they only confirm the legitimacy of *Iskra's* demand for an explanation (in the words "tight-rope walking and hints"), *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* itself asks the question: how could the Party have printed in its own press a manifesto it was not in agreement with? The answer given by *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* is as follows: "Why, in exactly the same way as *Rabocheye Dyelo*, *Iskra*, *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Borba* all appear with the imprint of the R.S.D.L.P." Good. But, in the first place, these very divergent publications are not printed at the "Party" printing office, but at the printing offices of the various groups. In the second place, when *Rabochaya Mysl*, *Rabocheye Dyelo* and *Iskra* all appeared at the same time we denounced this as *confusion*. See what follows: the Social-Democrats themselves lay bare and scourge confusion in *their own* ranks and try to get rid of it by serious theoretical work; the Socialist-Revolutionaries only begin to admit that there is confusion in their ranks *after* they have been exposed, and take the opportunity once again to boast of their breadth of view which permits them to issue, on the same day and on the occasion of the same political event, two manifestoes in which two diametrically opposite interpretations of the political significance of this event (a new terroristic act) are given. Knowing as they do that no good can come of ideological confusion, the Social-Democrats preferred to "first divide and then unite" in order to guarantee durability and fruitfulness to the future unity. The Socialist-Revolutionaries go on interpreting their programme in different ways, each at his own sweet will,¹ but at the same time they maintain the fiction of "practical" unity and superciliously say to us: it is only among you Social-Democrats that various

¹ You have only to compare *Our Tasks*, published by the former "League of Socialist-Revolutionaries," with the manifesto of the former "Socialist-Revolutionary Party" (see No. 5 of *Iskra*), then compare it with the editorial statement in No. 1 of *Vestnik Russkoy Revolyutsii*, with the "programme articles" in Nos. 7-11 of *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* and with the pamphlet *Freedom*, published by the so-called Workers' Party for the Political Liberation of Russia, whose fusion with the Socialist-Revolutionary Party was recently announced in *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya*.

“groups” exist; we have—a Party! Quite true, gentlemen, but history teaches us that sometimes the relations between “groups” and parties are like the relations between Pharaoh’s lean kine and fat kine. All sorts of “parties” exist. For example there was a “Workers’ Party for the Political Liberation of Russia” and yet its two years of existence passed as unobserved as its disappearance.

November 1902.

THE PERSECUTORS OF THE ZEMSTVO AND THE HANNIBALS OF LIBERALISM *

V¹

Mr. R. N. S.'s² preface represents much that is of interest. It touches upon the broadest questions concerning political reforms in Russia, the various methods by which these reforms can be brought about and the significance of the various forces leading to these reforms. On the other hand, Mr. R. N. S. who apparently has close relations with liberal circles generally, and with Zemstvo liberal circles in particular, undoubtedly sounds a new chord in the chorus of our "underground" literature. Therefore, in order to clear up the question of the political significance of the Zemstvos in principle, and in order that we may become acquainted with the currents and, I shall not say tendencies, but the moods prevailing in circles that stand close to the liberals, it will be useful to deal in detail with this preface, and to endeavour to decide whether what is new in it is good or bad, or how much of it is good and how much bad.

The fundamental feature of R.N.S.'s views is the following: as is apparent from numerous passages of his essay, which we quote below, he is in favour of peaceful, gradual and strictly legal development. On the other hand, he is wholeheartedly opposed to the autocracy and thirsts for political liberty. But the autocracy is what it is precisely because it prohibits and persecutes *all* "development" towards liberty. This contradiction permeates the whole of R. N. S.'s essay and renders his argumentation extremely illogical hesitating and unsound. It is possible to combine constitutionalism with a regard for the

¹Only chapters V and VI of this pamphlet are given in this volume.—*Ed.*

²The *nom de plume* of Struve. [Author's note to 1908 edition.—*Ed.*]

strictly legal development of autocratic Russia only on the premise, or at least the assumption, that the autocratic government will *itself* understand, grow weary, yield, etc. And Mr. R. N. S. does indeed sometimes fall from the height of his civic indignation to the vulgar point of view of the most immature liberalism. For example, this is what Mr. R. N. S. says of himself:

"We who regard the struggle for political liberty as a vow of Hannibal taken by contemporary enlightened people that is no less sacred than the struggle for the emancipation of the peasants was for the people of the 'forties. . . ." and again ". . . however trying it is to us who have taken the 'vow of Hannibal' to fight against the autocracy," etc.

Well said! These powerful words would have been an ornament to the article, had this spirit of indomitable and irreconcilable struggle ("the vow of Hannibal"!) pervaded the whole of it. But precisely because these words are so powerful they strike a discordant note when accompanied by the strains of artificial conciliation and pacification, by attempts, however forced, to introduce the conception of peaceful, strictly legal development. Unfortunately, more than enough of such notes and such attempts are observed in R. N. S.'s article. For example, he devotes a page and a half to a detailed "argumentation" of the idea that "the policy of the state during the reign of Nicholas II deserves *even sterner* [our italics] condemnation from the moral and political point of view than the reactionary revision of the reforms of Alexander II, carried out in the reign of Alexander III." * Why *sterner* condemnation? It appears that because Alexander III fought against revolution, while Nicholas II fought against "the legal aspirations of Russian society," the former fought against politically conscious forces, while the latter fought against—"quite peaceful, social forces, often acting without any clear political ideas" ("hardly even realising that their conscious cultural work was undermining the state system"). To a considerable degree this is untrue in point of fact, as we shall show further on. But apart from this, one cannot help noting the author's peculiar process of reasoning. He condemns autocracy, but condemns one autocrat *more* than another, not because of policy, for that has remained

unchanged, but because he has not (as he alleges) to contend against "termagants" who "naturally" call forth sharp resistance, and, consequently, he has no justification for his acts of persecution. Is not the very use of such an argument an obvious concession to the loyal and humble argument that our little father, the tsar, need not fear to call together his beloved people because all these beloved people have never dreamed of anything beyond the limits of peaceful strivings and strict legality? We are not surprised when Mr. Witte displays such a "process of reasoning" (or process of lying), when in his Memorandum, he writes:

"One would suppose that when there are no political parties and no revolution, and when the rights of the supreme authority are not being challenged, no contrast should be drawn between the administration and the people or society,¹ etc."

We are not surprised to encounter such arguments in the writings of Mr. Chicherin, who, in the memorandum he submitted to Count Milyutin after March 13 (1), 1881,² declared that: "The authorities must first of all display their energy and show that they have not lowered the flag in the face of danger," that "the monarchical system is compatible with free institutions only when the latter are the fruit of peaceful development and the calm initiative of the supreme authority itself," and recommended the establishment of a "strong and liberal" government operating with the aid of a "legislative organ strengthened and renovated by the elective element."³ It is natural that this Mr. Chicherin should regard the policy of Nicholas II as worthy of *greater* condemnation, *because* in his reign peaceful development and the calm initiative of the supreme authority itself *might have led* to free institutions. But is it natural and decent to hear such reasoning from a man who took the vow of Hannibal to fight?

¹ P. 205. "This is silly," observes R. N. S. in a footnote to this passage. Quite right. But is not R. N. S.'s reasoning on pp. xi-xii of his preface, quoted above, moulded from the same clay?

² The date of the assassination of Alexander II.—*Ed.*

³ Witte's Memorandum, pp. 122-23. "The Constitution of Count Loris-Melikov," p. 24.

Mr. R. N. S. is wrong in point of fact. "Now," he says, comparing the present reign with the previous one, "no one thinks seriously of the violent revolution advocated by the adherents of *Narodnaya Volya*." *Parlez pour vous, Monsieur!* Speak only for yourself. We know quite definitely that the revolutionary movement in Russia in the present reign has not only not died out, or subsided in comparison with the movement in the previous reign, but that on the contrary it has revived and grown manifoldly. What sort of "revolutionary" movement would it be if no one taking part in it thought seriously of a violent revolution? It may be objected that in the lines quoted, Mr. R. N. S. has in mind not violent revolution in general, but a specific, Narodovolist revolution, *i.e.*, a revolution that will be at one and the same time a political and a social revolution, leading not only to the overthrow of the autocracy, but also to the seizure of power. Such an objection, however, would be unsound. First, because from the point of view of the autocracy as such (*i.e.*, of the autocratic government and not of the "bourgeoisie" or "society"), it is not *the purpose for which* its overthrow is aimed at that matters, but *the very fact* that its overthrow is aimed at. Secondly, adherents of *Narodnaya Volya* at the very beginning of the reign of Alexander III "submitted" to the government the very alternative which Social-Democracy now submits to Nicholas II, namely, either revolutionary struggle or the renunciation of autocracy. (See the letter of the Executive Committee of *Narodnaya Volya* to Alexander III, dated March 22 (10), 1881, in which two conditions are put: 1) general amnesty to all political offenders; 2) the convening of an assembly of representatives of the whole of the Russian people on the basis of universal suffrage, free press, free speech and right of assembly.*) Mr. R. N. S. knows perfectly well that many people, not only among the intelligentsia, but also among the working class, "think seriously" about a violent revolution. Read page xxxix *et seq.* of his article in which reference is made to "revolutionary Social-Democracy," which possesses a "mass basis and intellectual forces," which is advancing towards "determined political struggle," towards the

"sanguinary struggle of revolutionary Russia against the autocratic-bureaucratic regime." (P. XLI.) There is not the slightest doubt, therefore, that R. N. S.'s "loyal speeches" are merely a trick, an attempt to influence the government (or "public opinion") by demonstrating his (or other people's) modesty.

Mr. R. N. S., by the way, thinks that the term "struggle" may be given a very wide interpretation. "The abolition of the Zemstvo," he writes, "will place a trump card in the hands of revolutionary propagandists; we say this quite objectively [*sic!*] without that sense of revulsion that is usually roused by revolutionary action, although we are no admirers of this form [*sic!*] of struggle for political and social progress." This is a most remarkable tirade. If we remove the quasi-scientific formula, which inappropriately flaunts its "objectivity" (since the author himself speaks of his preference for one or another form of activity or of struggle, to speak of his objectivity is like saying two and two equals one tallow candle), we shall find the old, old argument: you may believe me, gentlemen of the government, when *I* begin to talk about revolution, then things *must* be serious, for I am not at all inclined that way. The reference to objectivity is nothing more nor less than a fig leaf intended to conceal subjective antipathy to revolution and revolutionary activity. And Mr. R. N. S. stands in need of concealment, because such antipathy is totally incompatible with the vow of Hannibal.

By the way, are we not making a mistake about this Hannibal? Did he really take a vow to fight against the Romans, or only to fight for the progress of Carthage, whose progress, of course, in the final analysis, would injure Rome? Why should the term "struggle" be given such a "narrow" meaning? Mr. R. N. S. thinks it can be given a broader meaning. By comparing the vow of Hannibal with the above-mentioned tirade, it would appear that fighting against the autocracy manifests itself in various "forms." One form is revolutionary, illegal struggle; another form is to "fight for political and social progress" in general, in other words, peaceful legal activity, implanting culture within the limits permitted by the autocracy.

We do not doubt in the least that it is possible even under autocracy to carry on legal activity which will promote Russian progress—in some cases promoting technical progress rather rapidly, in a few cases promoting social progress insignificantly, and, in exceptional cases, promoting political progress to an infinitesimal degree. We may argue about the dimensions and possibilities of this infinitesimal progress, to what extent isolated cases of such progress are capable of paralysing the mass corruption which the autocracy constantly sows among the population everywhere. But to include, even indirectly, peaceful legal activity in the term, “to fight against the autocracy”—means facilitating this work of corruption and causing the ordinary Russian people to realise still less than they do already their responsibility as citizens for *everything* the government does.

Unfortunately, Mr. R. N. S. is not alone among the illegal writers who strive to obliterate the difference between revolutionary struggle and peaceful cultural work. He has a predecessor in the person of R. M., the author of the article, “Our Realities,” published in the celebrated Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl*. (September 1899.) In his controversy with the Social-Democratic revolutionaries, he wrote: “The fight for rural and urban local government, the fight for public schools, the fight for public courts, the fight for public aid to the famine-stricken population, etc., all comprise the fight against the autocracy. This social struggle, which for some unexplained reason fails to attract the benevolent interest of many Russian revolutionary writers, as we have seen, has not been waged by the Russian public since yesterday. . . . The question now is how should these separate social strata . . . carry on the fight against the autocracy in the most successful manner possible. . . . The principal question for us is, how . . . should this social struggle against the autocracy be waged by our workers, whose movement our revolutionaries regard as the best means for overthrowing the autocracy.” (Pp. 8-9.) As will be seen, R. M. thinks it superfluous to conceal his antipathy for revolutionaries; he quite openly declares legal opposition and

peaceful work to be fighting the autocracy, and considers the most important question to be, how the workers should conduct "*this*" fight. Mr. R. N. S. is not nearly so simple and frank, but the kinship between the political tendencies of this liberal and of the ardent worshippers of the labour movement pure and simple comes out very prominently.¹

As for "objectivity," it should be noted that Mr. R. N. S. sometimes plainly casts off his "objectivity." He is "objective" when he speaks of the labour movement, of its organic growth, of the future inevitable struggle revolutionary Social-Democracy will wage against the autocracy and when he states that the abolition of the Zemstvos will inevitably drive the liberals to organise an illegal party. All this is set forth in a very business-like and sober manner, so sober indeed that one can only rejoice that the labour movement in Russia is so well understood in liberal circles. But when Mr. R. N. S. begins to talk, not about fighting the enemy, but about the possibility of "subduing" him, he immediately loses his "objectivity," gives expression to his real sentiments, and even passes from the indicative mood to the imperative.

"Only in the event of men being found among the ruling class courageous enough to submit to history and compel the autocracy to submit to it, will the final and sanguinary struggle between revolutionary Russia and the autocratic-bureaucratic regime be avoided. . . . No doubt there are men among the higher bureaucracy who do not sympathise with a reactionary policy. . . . These men, the only men who have direct access to the throne, never dare express their convictions openly. . . . Perhaps the enormous shadow of the inevitable, historical day of judgment, the shadow of great events, will cause the governing circle to waver and induce it to destroy the iron system of reactionary policy while

¹ "The economic organisations of the workers," says Mr. R. N. S. in another passage, "will serve as a school for the practical political training of the masses of the workers." We would advise our author to be more careful in employing the term "practical," so beloved by the knights of opportunism. It cannot be denied that under certain conditions the industrial organisations of the workers may help very considerably toward their political training (no more than it can be denied that under other circumstances they may help toward their political corruption). But the masses of the workers can obtain *real* political training only by their general participation in the revolutionary movement, including open street fighting and civil war against the champions of political and economic slavery.

there is yet time. Comparatively little is required for this now. . . . Perhaps it [the government] will understand before it is too late the fatal danger of protecting the autocratic regime at all costs. Perhaps even before it has to face revolution, it will grow weary of its fight against the natural and historically necessary development of liberty, and will waver in its 'irreconcilable' policy. Ceasing to be consistent in its fight against liberty, it will be obliged to open the door wider and wider for it. Perhaps. . . . No, not perhaps, but *so be it!*" [Author's italics.]

Amen! is all that we need add to this loyal and lofty monologue. Our Hannibal makes such rapid progress that he now appears before us in a third form. The first was—fight against the autocracy, the second—implant culture, the third—call upon the enemy to submit and attempt to frighten him with a "shadow." What passion! We quite agree with our respected Mr. R. N. S. that nothing in the world frightens our bigoted Russian government more than "shadows." But immediately before proceeding to conjure up shadows, our author, in referring to the growth of the revolutionary forces and to the impending revolutionary outbreak, exclaimed: "We foresee with profound sorrow the horrible sacrifice in men and cultural forces that will have to be made for this madly aggressive conservative policy, which has neither political sense nor even a shadow of moral justification." What a bottomless chasm of unction and doctrinairism is revealed by this conclusion to an argument about the revolutionary outbreak! The author completely fails to understand the enormous historical significance it would have if, for once at least, the people of Russia taught the government a good lesson. Instead of pointing to the "horrible sacrifices" the people have been and are making for absolutism, and rousing their hatred and indignation and a passion to fight the autocracy, you mention *future* sacrifices in order to frighten people away from fighting. Gentlemen! Rather than spoil your arguments by such an ending it would have been far better had you entirely refrained from arguing about the "revolutionary outbreak." Apparently, you do not wish to *create* "great events," but merely to talk about the "shadows of great events," and then only with "men who have access to the throne."

Our legal press, too, as we know, is choc^o full of such talk

with shadows and about shadows, and in order to give substance to the shadows, it has become fashionable to refer to the "great reforms" and to sing hallelujahs to them, full of conventional lies. An author writing under the surveillance of the censor may sometimes be forgiven these lies, for he cannot otherwise express his striving for political reforms. But no censorship hovered over Mr. R. N. S. He writes: "The great reforms were not devised to crown the triumph of the bureaucracy." How evasive and apologetic this is! *By whom "devised"?* By Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Unkovsky and those who were with them? But these people demanded ever so much more than these "reforms" provided, and because of this, they were subjected to the persecution of the government that introduced the "great" reforms. Were they devised by the government and those who blindly followed it singing hallelujahs, while turning to snarl at the "termagants"? But the government strove by every means in its power to concede as little as possible, and to curtail the democratic demands *precisely for the purpose* of "crowning the triumph of the bureaucracy." Mr. R. N. S. is perfectly well aware of these historical facts, and obscures them only because they entirely refute his magnanimous theory concerning the possibility of "subduing" the autocracy. It is impossible to be submissive in politics, and only out of unbounded simplicity (and sly and unctuous simplicity) can the time-honoured police methods of *divide et impere*—divide and rule, yield the unimportant to preserve the essential, give with one hand, and take with the other—be taken for subduing. ". . . When the government of Alexander II devised and introduced the 'great reforms,' it did not at the same time deliberately set out to cut off every legal path the Russian people had to political liberty; it did not carefully weigh every step and every paragraph of the law with this end in view." This is *untrue*! The government of Alexander II, in "devising" the reforms and introducing them, deliberately set out from the very beginning to reject the demands for political liberty put forward at the time. From beginning to end it cut off every legal path to liberty; for it retorted to the most simple appeals with repressions, it never permitted free-

dom to be discussed freely. It is sufficient even to recall the facts mentioned in Witte's Memorandum, which we quoted above, to refute Mr. R. N. S.'s pæans of praise. Concerning the persons in the government of Alexander II, Witte expresses himself as follows:

"It must be observed that the prominent statesmen of the 'sixties, whose celebrated names will be preserved by a grateful posterity, did greater things in their time than have ever been done by their successors; they toiled over the renovation of our state and social system from sincere conviction, not to frustrate the strivings of their ruler, but out of unbounded loyalty to him." (P. 67 of the Memorandum.)

What is true is true. From sincere conviction . . . out of unbounded loyalty to the ruler at the head of the police gang. . . .

After this, we must not be surprised that Mr. R. N. S. says very little about the extremely important question of the role of the Zemstvos in the struggle for political liberty. Apart from the usual references to the "practical" and "cultural" work of the Zemstvos, he mentions in passing their "educational political significance." He says that the "Zemstvos have political significance" and that "the Zemstvos, as Mr. Witte clearly sees, are dangerous [to the present system] only because of the historical trend of their development—as the embryo of the constitution." And at the end of these seemingly casual remarks we get the following attack upon revolutionaries:

"We value Mr. Witte's work, not only because of the truth it tells about the autocracy, but also as a precious political testimonial to the Zemstvo granted by the bureaucracy itself. This testimonial is an excellent reply to those who, owing to their lack of political education, or because they are carried away by revolutionary phrases [*sic!*], refused and refuse to see the enormous political significance of the Russian Zemstvos and their legal cultural activity."

Who has revealed a lack of education? Who is carried away by phrases? Where and when? With whom does Mr. R. N. S. disagree? And why? To these questions no reply is forthcoming, for our author's attack is nothing more than an expression of his hostility towards revolutionaries which has been revealed to us by other passages in his article. The following queer explanatory note still leaves the subject obscure: "We do not by these words desire [?!] to insult revolutionaries whose

moral courage and struggle against tyranny cannot be too highly appraised." What is the purpose of this remark? What connection is there between moral courage and lack of ability to appreciate the Zemstvos? Mr. R. N. S. has indeed fallen out of the frying pan into the fire. First of all he "insults" revolutionaries by making an unsupported and "anonymous" (*i.e.*, it is not known against whom it is levelled) charge of ignorance and phrasemongering, and then he again "insults" them by assuming that they can be made to swallow the pill of the charge of ignorance if it is gilded with the recognition of their moral courage. To complete the confusion, Mr. R. N. S. contradicts himself by declaring, in one breath as it were with those "carried away by revolutionary phrases," that "the modern Russian Zemstvo . . . has not sufficient political weight to impress or frighten anyone by its own direct power. . . . It can barely maintain its own modest position. . . ." "Such institutions [like the Zemstvo] . . . may become a menace to this [autocratic] system only in the remote future and only as a result of the cultural development of the whole country."

VI

Let us, however, try to analyse the subject about which Mr. R. N. S. speaks so angrily and vapidly. The facts we have quoted above show that the "political significance" of the Zemstvos, *i.e.*, their significance as a factor in the struggle for political liberty, lies principally in the following: first, these bodies of representatives of our propertied classes (and particularly the landed aristocracy) serve as a constant contrast between elected institutions and the bureaucracy; they give rise to constant conflicts between these two; they expose at every step the reactionary character of irresponsible tsarist officialdom, and foster discontent and opposition to the bureaucratic government.¹

Secondly, the Zemstvos, which are attached to the bureaucratic

¹ See the extremely detailed treatment of this aspect of the question in the pamphlet by P. B. Axelrod, *The Historical Position and the Mutual Relations Between Liberal and Socialist Democracy in Russia*, Geneva, 1898. See particularly pp. 5, 8, 11-12, 17-19.

chariot like a superfluous fifth wheel, strive to consolidate their position and to enhance their significance; they strive towards a constitution; as Witte himself expresses it, they "unconsciously march towards" it by petitioning for it. For that reason they prove to be unsuitable allies for the government in its fight against the revolutionaries; they maintain a benevolent neutrality towards the latter and render them undoubted if indirect service by causing the government to waver in its measures of repression at critical moments. Of course, institutions, which hitherto have proved capable, at best, of making only liberal petitions and of maintaining benevolent neutrality, cannot be regarded as an "important," or to any degree an independent, factor in the political struggle; but it cannot be denied that the Zemstvos represent one of the *auxiliary* factors in the struggle. In this sense we are prepared, if you will, even to regard the Zemstvos as a piece of the constitution. Perhaps the reader will say: then you agree with Mr. R. N. S. who does not claim any more for them? Not at all. This is where our difference with him begins.

Let us admit for the sake of argument that the Zemstvos are—a piece of the constitution. But it is a piece that was used to decoy Russian "society" away from a constitution. It was a relatively unimportant position which the autocracy conceded to growing democracy in order to retain its principal positions, in order to divide and disunite those who demanded political reforms. We have seen how this policy of disuniting succeeded in the 'sixties and in 1880-81 * on the basis of "confidence" in the Zemstvos ("the embryo of the constitution"). The question of the relation between the Zemstvos and political liberty is an incident in the general question of the relation between reform and revolution, and this incident serves to illustrate the narrow-mindedness and stupidity of the fashionable Bernsteinian theory, which substitutes the struggle for reforms for revolutionary struggle, and declares (for example, through the lips of Mr. Berdyaev) that the "principle of progress is: the better things are, the better." This principle in its general form is as untrue as its reverse: the worse things are, the better. Revolutionaries, of course, will never abstain from fighting for reforms, from cap-

turing even minor and unimportant enemy positions, *if* they will serve to strengthen the attack and help to achieve complete victory. But they will never forget that sometimes the enemy surrenders positions in order to disunite the attacking party, and thus defeat them more easily. They will never forget that only by having the "ultimate aim" in view, only by appraising every step of the "movement" and every reform from the point of view of the general revolutionary struggle, will it be possible to safeguard the movement against false steps and disgraceful mistakes.

Now this aspect of the question—the significance of the Zemstvos as an instrument for *strengthening* the autocracy by means of half-hearted concessions, as an instrument for bringing over a certain section of the liberal public to the side of the autocracy—Mr. R. N. S. has completely failed to understand. He preferred to invent for his own use a doctrinaire scheme by which the Zemstvos and the constitution were joined by the straight line "formula": the better things are, the better. "If you first abolish the Zemstvos in Russia," he says, addressing himself to Mr. Witte, "and then increase the rights of the person, you deprive yourself of a very good opportunity to give the country a moderate constitution, which would be the historical outgrowth of local government with a feudal estate tinge. At all events you render the cause of conservatism a very bad service." What a beautiful and harmonious conception! Local government with an estate tinge—a wise conservative, having access to the throne—a moderate constitution. The unfortunate thing about it is that in actual practice the wise conservatives have on more than one occasion, thanks to the Zemstvos, found "very good opportunities" to *withhold* the constitution from the country.

Mr. R. N. S.'s peaceful "conception" had its effect also on the slogan with which he concludes his article and which is printed precisely as a slogan, on a separate line and in heavy type: "Rights, and an Authoritative All-Russian Zemstvo!" It must be frankly confessed that this is as much an unworthy coquetting with the political prejudices of the broad masses of Russian liberals as is *Rabochaya Mysl's* coquetting with the political prejudices of the broad masses of the workers.* It is our duty to

protest against this coquetting in both cases. The idea that the government of Alexander II did not cut off the legal path to liberty, that the existence of the Zemstvos provides a very good opportunity for granting a moderate constitution to the country, and that the slogan, "Rights, and an Authoritative All-Russian Zemstvo," can serve as the banner of, we shall not say the revolutionary, but at all events the constitutional movement, is a prejudice. It is not a banner that can serve to separate enemies from allies, or help to direct and guide the movement; it is but a rag which can help only the most unreliable characters to attach themselves to the movement, and help the government to make still another attempt to pass off high-sounding promises and half-hearted reforms. One need not be a prophet to be able to prophesy that: our revolutionary movement will reach its apogee and the liberal ferment in society will increase tenfold, and then new Loris-Melikovs and Ignatyevs will appear in the government and inscribe on their banner: "Rights, and an Authoritative Zemstvo." But if this should come to pass, it would be to the extreme disadvantage of Russia and to the extreme advantage of the government. If any considerable section of the liberals put their faith in this banner, and, allowing themselves to be carried away by it, attack the revolutionary "termagants" in the rear, the latter may find themselves isolated, and the government will try to restrict itself to a minimum of concessions in the form of an advisory and aristocratic constitution. Whether this attempt will be successful or not depends upon the outcome of the decisive battle between the revolutionary proletariat and the government. But of one thing we may be certain, and that is, that the liberals will be cheated. With the aid of slogans like those advanced by Mr. R. N. S. ("Authoritative Zemstvo," or "Zemshchina," etc.) the government will decoy them like puppies away from the revolutionaries and then will take them by the scruff of the neck and thrash them with the whip of the so-called reaction. And when that happens, gentlemen, we shall say: *serve you right!*

Why, instead of demanding the abolition of absolutism, are such moderate and carefully worded desiderata put forward in the form of concluding slogans? First of all, for the sake of the

philistine doctrinairism which desires to render a "service to conservatism" and which believes that the government will be mollified by such moderation and become "subdued" by it. Secondly, in order to "unite the liberals." Indeed, the slogan: "Rights, and an Authoritative Zemstvo" can, perhaps, serve to unite *all* liberals in the same way as (in the opinion of the Economists) the slogan "a kopek on the ruble" will unite *all* the workers. But will not *such* unity be a loss rather than a gain? Unity is an advantage when it raises all those who are united to the level of the intelligent and resolute programme of the thing that unites. Unity is a disadvantage when it degrades those who are united to the level of the prejudices of the masses. And among a large number of Russian liberals there is undoubtedly a widespread prejudice that the Zemstvo is indeed the "embryo of the constitution,"¹ the "natural," peaceful and gradual growth of which is accidentally retarded by the intrigues of certain wicked favourites, that only a few petitions are necessary in order to "subdue" the autocrat, that legal cultural work generally, and Zemstvo work in particular, has "considerable political significance" which relieves those who express mere verbal hostility to the autocracy of the obligation of actively supporting

¹ In regard to what may be expected from the Zemstvo it may not be without interest to cite the following opinion expressed by Prince P. V. Dolgorukov in his *Listok* [Sheet] published in the 'sixties. (Burtsev, pp. 63-66.) "In examining the principal regulations governing the Zemstvo institutions, we again come across the secret thought of the government continually breaking out into the light, *viz.*, overwhelm with generosity; loudly proclaim: 'See how much I am giving you!' but give as little as possible, and even impose restrictions upon the enjoyment of the little that is given. . . . Under the present autocratic system, the Zemstvo institutions do not and cannot bring any benefits, and will not and cannot have any significance, but they are pregnant with the embryo of fruitful development in the future. . . . Probably the new Zemstvo institutions are destined to serve as the foundation of the future constitutional order in Russia. . . . But as long as Russia lacks a constitutional system of government, as long as the autocracy exists, and as long as freedom of the press is denied, the Zemstvo institutions will be doomed to remain political phantoms, *mute* assemblies of Zemstvo councillors."

Thus even in the 'sixties, Dolgorukov was not very optimistic. The forty years that have elapsed since then have taught us much and have demonstrated that the Zemstvos were destined by "fate" (and also by the government) to serve as the basis for a whole series of measures which have *overwhelmed* the constitutionalists.

the revolutionary struggle against the autocracy in one way or another, etc. Undoubtedly, the unity of the liberals would be very useful and desirable, but only a unity the aim of which is to combat outworn prejudices and not to play up to them, to raise the general level of our political development (or rather undevelopment) and not to sanction it, in a word, only unity for the purpose of supporting the illegal struggle and not for the purpose of opportunistic phrasemongering about the political significance of legal activity can be of any use. To issue the slogan, "An Authoritative Zemstvo," to liberals can no more be justified than issuing the political slogan, "freedom to strike," etc., to the workers. *Under the autocracy* any sort of Zemstvo, however "authoritative" it may be, will inevitably be a deformity, incapable of development, while *under a constitution* the Zemstvo will immediately lose its present-day "political" significance.

The unity of liberals may be brought about in two ways: by forming an independent liberal party (illegal, of course), or by organising liberal aid for revolutionaries. Mr. R. N. S. points to the first form, but . . . if what he says in this connection is to be taken as a genuine expression of the views and prospects of liberalism, then it gives no ground for very great optimism. He writes: "Without a Zemstvo, the Zemstvo liberals will have to form a liberal party, or abandon the historical stage as an organised force. We are convinced that the organisation of liberals in an illegal party, although with a very moderate programme and employing very moderate methods, will be the inevitable result of the abolition of the Zemstvo." But if it will be only the result of the "abolition" of the Zemstvos, then we shall have to wait a long time for it, for even Witte does not wish to abolish them, while the Russian government is always concerned with preserving outward appearances, even if the internal content is completely extracted. That a liberal party will be a very moderate one is quite natural, and it is useless to expect that the movement among the bourgeoisie (for only on that movement can a liberal party be based) will give rise to any other. But what should be the activities and the "methods" of such a party?

Mr. R. N. S. does not explain. He says: "Taken by itself, an illegal liberal party, being an organisation consisting of the most moderate and least mobile of the opposition elements, cannot develop either particularly wide or particularly intensive activity. . . ." We think, however, that in a certain sphere, say within the restricted limits of local, and above all, of Zemstvo interests, the liberal party could very well develop wide and intensive activity, for example, the organisation of political exposures. ". . . But with such activity being carried on by other parties, especially by the Social-Democratic or Labour Party, the liberal party, even without entering into any direct agreement with the Social-Democrats, can become a very important factor. . . ." Very true; and the reader would naturally expect the author, at least in general outline, to describe the work of this "factor." But instead of doing that, Mr. R. N. S. describes the growth of revolutionary Social-Democracy and concludes: "With the existence of a pronounced political movement . . . a liberal opposition, if it is in the least organised, can play an important political role; if proper tactics are adopted, a moderate party always stands to gain from the growing acuteness of the struggle between the extreme elements in society. . . ." And that is all! The "role" of the "factor" (which has already managed to convert itself from a party into an "opposition") is to "gain" from the growing acuteness of the struggle. Mention is made of what the liberals stand to gain, but not a word is said about the liberals taking part in the fight. An oversight; a providential one in fact. . . .

Russian Social-Democrats have never closed their eyes to the fact that the political liberties for which they are fighting will *first and foremost* benefit the bourgeoisie. Only a Socialist who is steeped in the worst prejudices of utopianism or reactionary Narodism would object to carrying on the fight against the autocracy for that reason. The bourgeoisie will benefit by these liberties and rest on its laurels. The proletariat, however, needs liberty in order to develop the fight for socialism to the utmost. And Social-Democracy will persistently carry on the fight for liberation, no matter what the attitude of the various strata of the

bourgeoisie towards this fight may be. In the interest of the political struggle, we must support every opposition that is raised against the oppression of the autocracy, no matter on what grounds it may be raised and by what social stratum it is expressed. For that reason, we are by no means indifferent to the opposition expressed by our liberal bourgeoisie generally, and by our Zemstvo-ists in particular. If the liberals succeed in organising themselves in an illegal party, so much the better. We shall welcome the growth of political consciousness among the propertied classes; we shall support their demands, we shall endeavour to work so that the activities of the Social-Democrats and the liberals mutually supplement each other.¹ But even if they fail to do so (which is more probable), we shall not give them up in disgust. We shall try to establish contacts with individual liberals, make them acquainted with our movement, support them by exposing in the labour press all the despicable acts of the government and the local authorities, and try to induce them to support the revolutionaries. Such an exchange of service between liberals and Social-Democrats is going on already, it must be extended and made constant. But while always ready to carry on this exchange of services, we shall never, under any circumstances, cease to carry on a determined struggle against the illusions which are so widespread in politically undeveloped Russian society generally and in Russian liberal society in particular. In regard to the Russian revolutionary movement we may say, paraphrasing the celebrated statement of Marx, in regard to the Revolution of 1848, that its progress lies not so much in the achievement of positive gains, as in emancipation from harmful illusions.* We have emancipated ourselves from the illusions of anarchism and of Narodnik socialism, from contempt for poli-

¹The present writer had occasion to point out the utility of a liberal party four years ago, in commenting upon the *Narodnoye Pravo* [People's Right] Party. See *The Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats*, Geneva, 1898, p. 26. We said: "... If, however, there are in the party [*Narodnoye Pravo*] not masquerade, but real non-socialist politicians, non-socialist democrats, then this party can do not a little good by striving to draw closer to the political opposition elements among our bourgeoisie. . ." (See *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 513.—Ed. Eng. ed.)

tics, from the belief that Russia will develop in its own peculiar way, from the conviction that the people are ready for revolution, and from the theory of the seizure of power in single combat between the heroic intelligentsia and the autocracy.

It is time our liberals emancipated themselves from the illusion which would appear to be theoretically bankrupt, but which reveals extreme vitality in practice, *viz.*, that parleys with the Russian autocracy are possible, that some sort of Zemstvo is the embryo of the constitution, and that the sincere adherents of the latter can fulfil their vow of Hannibal by patient legal activity and patient appeals to the enemy to become subdued.

June-July 1901.

DRAFT OF A PROGRAMME FOR THE SOCIAL- DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF RUSSIA *

[A]

I. Commodity production is developing in Russia at an increasing rate and the domination of the capitalist system of production is becoming more and more complete.

II. The continuous advance of technique results in small production being squeezed out by large-scale production. The important part of the means of production (land and factories, tools and machinery, railways and other means of communication) is becoming concentrated in the hands of a relatively insignificant number of capitalists and big landowners as their private property. Independent small producers (peasants, home workers, artisans) are being more and more ruined, losing their means of production and thus becoming transformed into proletarians, or else into the servants and tributaries of capital. An ever increasing number of workers are compelled to fall back on the sale of their labour power; they become wage labourers dependent on the owners and by their labour create the wealth of the latter.

III. The greater the advances made by technical progress, the more does the growth of the demand for labour power lag behind the growth of its supply, and the greater become the possibilities of the capitalists of raising the rate of exploitation of the workers. Insecurity of existence and unemployment, the burden of exploitation and every kind of humiliation become the lot of increasingly wide strata of the working population.

IV. This process is still further aggravated by industrial crises, which are the inevitable outcome of the fundamental contradictions of capitalism. The poverty and destitution of the masses go hand in hand with the waste of social wealth as a

consequence of the impossibility of finding markets for the commodities produced.

V. Thus the gigantic development of the productive forces of social, and increasingly socialised, labour is accompanied by the fact that all the chief advantages of this development are monopolised by an insignificant minority of the population. The growth of the wealth of society is accompanied by the growth of social inequality; the gulf between the class of owners (bourgeoisie) and the class of the proletariat becomes deeper and wider.

[B]

VI. But while all these inevitable contradictions of capitalism grow and develop, the numbers and the solidarity, the discontent and the indignation of the proletariat also grow, the struggle between the working class and the capitalist class is aggravated and the desire grows to throw off the intolerable yoke of capitalism.

VII. The emancipation of the working class can only be the task of the working class itself. All the other classes of contemporary society stand for preserving the foundations of the existing economic order. The real emancipation of the working class requires a social revolution—which is being prepared by the whole evolution of capitalism—*i.e.*, the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production, their transformation into the property of the state, and the substitution for the capitalist production of commodities of the socialist organisation of the production of articles for the benefit of society as a whole, with the object of securing the greatest benefit and the free and all-round development of all its members.

VIII. This proletarian revolution will completely abolish the division of society into classes and, consequently, all the social and political inequality arising out of that division.

IX. In order to carry out this social revolution the proletariat must win political power, which will make it the master of the situation and allow it to remove all obstacles that stand in the way of its great objective. In this sense the dictatorship of the

proletariat is the necessary political condition of the social revolution.

X. Russian Social-Democracy sets itself the task of laying bare before the workers the irreconcilable antagonism between their interests and the interests of the capitalists, of showing to the proletariat the historical significance, character and condition of the social revolution it is destined to carry out, and of organising a revolutionary class party capable of directing all the manifestations of the struggle of the proletariat.

XI. But the development of international exchange and of production for the world market has created so close a link between all the nations of the civilised world that today the working class movement had to be, and long ago became, an international movement. Russian Social-Democracy regards itself as a unit of the world army of the proletariat, as part of international Social-Democracy.

XII. The immediate objectives of Russian Social-Democracy are, however, considerably modified by the fact that in our country numerous survivals of the pre-capitalist, feudal social order very greatly retard the development of productive forces, render impossible the complete and all-round development of the class struggle of the proletariat, keep down the standard of living of the working population, determine the barbarous Asiatic forms under which the peasantry, numbering many millions, is dying out, and keep all the people in a state of ignorance, inequality and subjection.

XIII. The most important of these survivals of the serf system and the most powerful bulwark of all this barbarism is the tsarist autocracy. It is the worst and most dangerous enemy of the movement for the emancipation of the proletariat, and of the cultural development of the whole of the people.

[C]

For these reasons¹ the R.S.D.L.P. sets itself as an immediate political task: to overthrow the tsarist autocracy and to supplant

¹ Here begins the text adopted by the commission as a whole. [*I.e.*, the Programme Commission of the editorial board of *Iskra*.—*Ed.*]

it by a *republic* on the basis of a democratic constitution that would secure:

1) The sovereignty of the people, *i.e.*, the concentration of all the sovereign power in the state in the hands of a legislative assembly composed of the representatives of the people;

2) Universal, equal and direct suffrage in the elections to the legislative assembly as well as to all the organs of local government for every citizen having attained the age of twenty-one; secret ballot at the elections; the right of every elector to be elected to any of the representative assemblies; payment of the representatives of the people;

3) The inviolability of the person and homes of citizens;

4) Unrestricted liberty of conscience, freedom of speech, of the press, of meetings, of strikes and of combination;

5) Freedom to move from place to place and to engage in any trade desired;

6) The abolition of estates; complete equality of rights for all citizens, irrespective of sex, religion or race;

7) The recognition of the right of self-determination for all nationalities in the state;

8) The right of every citizen to prosecute before a court any official, without having first to complain to the latter's superiors;

9) The abolition of the standing army and the substitution for it of the universal arming of the people;

10) The separation of the church from the state and of the schools from the church;

11) Universal, free and compulsory education up to the age of sixteen; poor children to be supplied with food, clothes and school appliances at the cost of the state.

[D]

For the purpose of protecting the working class and of increasing its fighting power¹ the R.S.D.L.P. demands:

¹ Moved by Frey [Lenin—*Ed.*]: to amend the beginning of the paragraph as follows: "For the purpose of preserving the working class from physical and moral degeneration, as well as for the purpose of increasing its power in its struggle for its emancipation. . ."

1) The limitation of the working day for all wage labourers to eight hours in every twenty-four;

2) The legal enactment of a continuous weekly rest period of not less than thirty-six hours for all wage labourers of both sexes in all branches of national economy;

3) The prohibition of all overtime;

4) The prohibition of night work (from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.) in all branches of national economy except those in which it is absolutely necessary for technical reasons;

5) The prohibition of wage-labour for children under fifteen;

6) The prohibition of female labour in occupations particularly harmful to women's health;

7) The legal responsibility of employers for the complete or partial disablement of workers if this disablement is due to accident or to harmful conditions of labour; the workers to be freed from the onus of proof that the disablement was the employer's fault;

8) The prohibition of payment of wages in kind¹;

9) State pensions for aged workers who have lost the capacity to work;

10) That the number of factory inspectors be increased; that female inspectors be appointed in those occupations in which female labour predominates; that the observance of the factory laws be placed under the supervision of representatives elected by the workers and to be paid by the state; piece rates and deductions for spoiled work to be supervised by elected representatives of the workers;

11) That the organs of local government set up bodies to include representatives of the workers to inspect the sanitary condition of the dwellings assigned by the employers for the workers, as well as the regulations concerning these dwellings and their conditions of lease—with the object of protecting the wage labourers from the interference of the employers in their lives as private persons and citizens;

¹ Moved by Frey: to insert here: "the compulsory inclusion in all contracts concerning the hiring of workers of a clause guaranteeing weekly payment of wages."

12) That a properly organised all-round system of health inspection of the conditions of work in all undertakings employing wage-labour be established;

13) That factory inspection be extended to artisan, home and rural industry, and to state enterprises;

14) That breach of the factory acts be deemed a criminal offence;

15) The prohibition of all deductions from wages, on any pretext or for any object whatsoever (fines, spoiled work, etc.);

16) The establishment of industrial courts in all branches of national economy, on which the workers and the employers shall be represented in equal numbers.

[E]

In addition to this and with the object of democratising Russia's state economy, the R.S.D.L.P. demands: the abolition of all indirect taxation and the establishment of a graduated income tax.

With a view to removing the survivals of the old serf system the Party will strive to obtain¹:

1) The abolition of land compensation payments and quit-rents as well as of all obligations at present imposed on the peasantry as the tax paying estate;

2) The abolition of mutual responsibility² and of all laws restricting the peasants in the free disposal of their land;

3) The restitution to the people of all sums taken from it in the form of land compensation payments and quit-rent; the confiscation with this object of the property of the monasteries and of the appanage estates, and the imposition of a special land tax on the big landowning nobility who received land compensation loans, the revenue from this tax to be placed into a special

¹ Proposed by Frey: the following words to be inserted here: "for the purpose of facilitating the free development of the class struggle in the countryside," so that the clause read as follows: "With a view to removing the survivals of the old serf system and for the purpose of facilitating the free development of the class struggle in the countryside, the R.S.D.L.P. will strive to obtain . . ."

² All the members of the village commune were jointly held responsible for the payment of taxes, etc.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

people's fund for the cultural and charitable needs of the rural communities;

4) The establishment of peasant committees;

a) for the restitution to the rural communities (by expropriation, or, in cases where the land has changed hands, with compensation) of the land which at the time of the abolition of serfdom was taken away from the peasants, and serves in the hands of the landlords as an instrument for keeping the peasants in a state of bondage;

b) for the abolition of the survivals of serfdom in the Urals, in the Altai, in the Western region and in other parts of the country;

5) That the courts be empowered to reduce excessive rents and to declare invalid all contracts that entail bondage.

[F]

While striving to achieve its immediate political and economic aims,¹ the R.S.D.L.P. supports every opposition and revolutionary movement directed against the social and political order existing in Russia, but emphatically rejects all those reform plans which represent every extension of police tutelage over the toiling masses as a step towards the solution of the social problem.²

On its part, the R.S.D.L.P. is firmly convinced that the complete, consistent and durable fulfilment of the political and social changes set out above can only be achieved by overthrowing the autocracy and convening a Constituent Assembly freely elected by the whole people.

January-February 1902.

¹ Proposed by Frey: to amend the beginning of the paragraph to read as follows: "While fighting for these demands, the R.S.D.L.P.," etc.

² Proposed by Frey: to amend the end of the paragraph to read as follows: "projects implying any extension or consolidation of the tutelage of the police and the officials over the toiling masses."

CRITICISM OF PLEKHANOV'S SECOND DRAFT

FOUR fundamental defects permeate the whole draft and make it, in my opinion, quite unacceptable:

1) Owing to the way in which the most important section, containing the characterisation of capitalism, is formulated, the draft is not that of a programme of the proletariat *fighting* against very real manifestations of a very definite capitalism, but that of a programme of an economic *textbook* on capitalism in general.

2) The programme is particularly unsuitable for the party of the *Russian* proletariat, because the evolution of Russian capitalism and the contradictions and social evils generated by Russian capitalism are almost entirely evaded and obscured by this system of characterising capitalism in general. The party of the Russian proletariat must formulate its charge against Russian capitalism, its declaration of war on Russian capitalism in the most unambiguous manner. This is all the more necessary inasmuch as the Russian programme cannot be identical in this respect with the European programmes; the latter speak of capitalism and of bourgeois society without stating explicitly that these conceptions are applicable to Austria and to Germany and so on, because that goes without saying. In relation to Russia this cannot be taken for granted.

To be content with stating that capitalism "in its developed form" is distinguished *in general* by such and such characteristics and that in Russia capitalism "is becoming predominant" is to shirk that concrete charge and declaration of war which for a practical, fighting party is the most important thing.

For this reason the draft does not achieve one of the principal objects of a programme, which is, to serve the Party as a guide in its day-to-day propaganda and agitation concerning all the various manifestations of Russian capitalism.

3) Some of the most important points have been stated in a form so vague that it will inevitably give rise to a number of very dangerous misunderstandings and hinder our theoretical struggle and propaganda. Thus, the growth of large-scale production is confined to "industrial" undertakings. The evolution of capitalism in agriculture is either obscured or left out altogether. Further, instead of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" we have "a revolution, which shall be carried out by the proletariat, supported by the other strata of the population that suffer from capitalist exploitation," and instead of the class struggle of the proletariat we have "the struggle of the toiling and exploited mass." This formulation contradicts the fundamental principle of the International: "the emancipation of the working class can only be the task of the working class itself." Apart from the proletariat, the other sections of the "toiling and exploited mass" (i.e., mainly the small producers) are only *partly* revolutionary in their struggle against the bourgeoisie. To be precise, they are revolutionary "only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat . . . they desert their own standpoint to *place themselves at that of the proletariat.*" (*Communist Manifesto.*) But the reactionary character of the small producer is not brought out in the draft, so that *speaking generally* the relation of the proletariat to "the toiling and exploited mass" is *wrongly* stated. For example, the draft says: "The struggle [of the toiling and exploited mass] and first of all the struggle of its most advanced representative, the proletariat, becomes more acute." The "aggravation of the struggle" of the small producers finds expression in anti-Semitism, and in Cæsarism, and in peasant unions directed against the farm hands and even in the struggle between the social Gironde and the Mountain. The fact that the proletariat represents the whole of the toiling and exploited mass must find its expression in the programme in the fact that we *accuse* capitalism of being the cause of the poverty of the *masses* (and not of the working class alone) and the cause of the unemployment of "ever more extensive strata of the toiling population" (and not only of the working class).

4) The draft constantly tends to become a commentary instead of a programme in the strict sense of the word. A programme must give *concise statements*, containing not one superfluous word, and leave the work of *explanation* to commentaries, pamphlets, agitation, etc. For this reason Engels was perfectly right when he said that the Erfurt programme was too long, too circumstantial and too full of repetition, so that it tended to become a commentary.

In the present draft this defect is still more apparent, there is a dreadful amount of repetition; the attempts to include an *explanation* of the process (instead of merely a *characterisation* of the process) fail to achieve their end, and only stretch the programme to an impossible degree.

February-March 1902.

THE WORKERS' PARTY AND THE PEASANTRY *

FORTY years have passed since the peasants were emancipated. It is quite natural that the public should, with particular enthusiasm, celebrate March 3 (February 19), the anniversary of the fall of old feudal Russia and the beginning of the epoch which promised Russia liberty and prosperity. We must not forget that while the laudatory ceremonial speeches contain much that sincerely expresses hatred towards serfdom and all its manifestations, they also contain much hypocrisy. The now fashionable estimation of this "great" reform as "the emancipation of the peasantry with a grant of land *with the aid* of state compensation" is utterly hypocritical and false. The peasants, as a matter of fact, were emancipated *from* the land, for the plots of land which they had owned for centuries were considerably whittled down. Hundreds and thousands of peasants were completely deprived of land, and settled on a wretched fourth of an allotment. In fact, the peasants were doubly robbed: not only were their allotments cut down, but they had to pay "compensation" for the portion of that which was left to them and which had always been in their possession, and, moreover, the price they had to pay was considerably higher than its actual value. Ten years after the emancipation of the peasantry the landlords themselves admitted to the government officials, who were investigating the state of agriculture, that the peasants were compelled to pay not only for their land, but also for their personal liberty. And although the peasants paid for their liberation, they did not become free men; for twenty years they remained "temporarily bonded"; they were left and have remained to this day the lower estate, who could be flogged, who paid special imposts, who had no right freely to leave the semi-feudal commune, had no right freely to dispose of their own land, or to settle freely in any part of the state.

Our peasant reform is not a tribute to the magnanimity of the government; on the contrary, it serves as a great historical example of how soiled everything is that leaves the hands of the autocratic government. Owing to the military defeats,* the serious financial difficulties and the menacing discontent of the peasantry, the government was *compelled* to emancipate the latter.** The tsar himself admitted that the peasants ought to be emancipated from above, lest they emancipate themselves from below. But in undertaking the task of emancipating the peasantry, the government did all it possibly could to satisfy the greed of the "injured" serf owners. The government did not even hesitate to play the dirty trick of reshuffling the men who were appointed to carry out the reform, although these men had been selected from among the nobility themselves. The first body of arbitrators that was elected was dissolved, and replaced by men who were incapable of resisting the serf owners in their efforts to cheat the peasantry even in the process of redistributing the land. The great reform could not be carried out without resort to military executions and the shooting down of the peasantry who refused to accept the statutory charter.*** It is not surprising, therefore, that the best men of the time, muzzled by the censors, met this great reform with a curse—of silence.

The peasant, "emancipated" from serf labour, emerged from the hands of the reformers a crushed, plundered, degraded man, tied to his plot of land, so much so that nothing was left for him to do except "voluntarily" accept serf labour. And the peasant began to cultivate the land of his former master by "renting" from him the very land that had been "clipped" from his own allotment, and by hiring himself in the winter for work in the summer, in repayment of the loan of corn which he had borrowed from the landlord to feed his hungry family. The "free labour," for which the manifesto, drawn up by a Jesuit priest, called upon the peasantry to ask the "blessing of God," turned out to be nothing more nor less than serf labour and bondage.****

To the oppression of the landlords, which was preserved, thanks to the magnanimity of the officials who introduced and carried out the reform, was added the oppression of capital. The power

of money, which crushed even the French peasant—who was emancipated from the power of the feudal landlords, not by miserable half-hearted reforms, but by a mighty popular revolution—this power of money bore down with all its weight upon our semi-serf muzhik. The peasant had to obtain money at all costs in order to pay the taxes which had increased as a result of the beneficent reform, in order to rent land, to buy the few miserable articles of manufactured goods—which began to squeeze out the home manufactures of the peasant—to buy corn, etc. The power of money not only crushed the peasantry, but split it up. An enormous number of peasants were steadily ruined and converted into proletarians. From the minority arose a small group of shrewd and greedy kulaks, who began to lay their avaricious hands upon the lands and farms of the peasants, and who represented the first cadres of the rising rural bourgeoisie. The forty years that have elapsed since the reform have been marked by this constant process of “de-peasantising” the peasants, a process of slow and painful extinction of the peasantry. The peasants were reduced to the level of beggars. They lived together with their cattle, they were clothed in rags and fed on weeds. The peasants fled from their allotments, if they had anywhere to go, and even paid to be relieved of them, if they could induce anyone to take them over and continue the payments on the land which exceeded the income derived from it.* The peasants were in a state of chronic starvation, and died in hundreds of thousands from famine and epidemics during bad harvests, which recurred with increasing frequency.

This is the state of our countryside even at the present time. The question is: what is the way out, and by what means can we seek to improve the lot of the peasantry? The small peasantry may emancipate itself from the yoke of capital only by joining the labour movement, by helping the workers in their fight for the socialist system and for converting the land as well as other means of production (factories, works, machines, etc.) into public property. To attempt to save the peasantry by protecting their small farms and their small properties from the advance of capitalism would mean uselessly retarding social

development and deceiving the peasantry with illusions about the possibility of achieving prosperity under capitalism; it would mean disuniting the toiling classes and creating a privileged position for the minority at the expense of the majority. That is why Social-Democrats will always fight against senseless and harmful institutions like those which prohibit the peasant from disposing of his land, like mutual responsibility, the prohibition against freely leaving the peasant commune and the free acceptance into the commune of persons belonging to any estate. As we have seen, however, our peasants are suffering not so much from the oppression of capital as from the oppression of the landlords and the survivals of serfdom. Ruthless struggle against these shackles, which have made the lot of the peasantry immeasurably worse, and which tie it hand and foot, is not only possible but even necessary for the sake of the entire social development of the country; for the hopeless poverty, ignorance, tyranny and degradation, from which the peasants suffer, leave their impress upon the whole of our country—the impress of Asiatic barbarism. Social-Democrats would not be performing their duty if they did not render every assistance to this struggle. This assistance should take the form, to put it briefly, of *carrying the class war into the countryside*.

We have seen that in the modern Russian countryside two kinds of class antagonism exist side by side: first, the struggle between the rural workers and the rural employers; and second, between the peasantry as a whole and the landlord class as a whole. The first antagonism is developing and becoming more acute; the second is gradually diminishing. The first is still wholly in the future; the second to a considerable degree already belongs to the past. And yet in spite of this, it is the second antagonism that has the most vital and most practical significance for Russian Social-Democrats at the present time. It goes without saying that we must utilise all the opportunities that present themselves to us to develop the class consciousness of the agricultural wage workers, and that we must pay attention to the urban workers who go into the country districts (for example, the mechanics employed on steam threshing machines,

etc.) and to the markets where agricultural labourers are hired. This is an axiom for every Social-Democrat.

But our rural labourers are still too closely connected with the peasantry, they still share too closely the misfortunes of the peasantry generally to enable the movement of the rural workers to assume national significance, either now or in the immediate future. On the other hand, the question of sweeping away the survivals of serfdom, of driving the spirit of feudal inequality out of the whole of the Russian state system and the degradation of tens of millions of the "common people," are already matters of national significance; and the party which claims to be the vanguard in the fight for liberty cannot ignore them.

The deplorable state of the peasantry has now become (in a more or less general form) almost universally recognised. The phrase about "the defects" of the Reform of 1861, and about the need for state aid, has become a current truism. It is our duty to point out that the misfortunes of the peasantry arise precisely from the class oppression of the peasantry; that the government is the loyal champion of the oppressing classes, and that those who sincerely and seriously desire a radical improvement in the conditions of the peasantry must seek, not aid from the government, but to get rid of the oppression of the government and win political liberty. It is said that the compensation rates are too high; there is talk about beneficial measures to reduce these payments, and to postpone the dates of payment. Our reply to this is: these compensation payments are nothing more nor less than robbery of the peasantry by the landlords and the government, screened by legal forms and official phrases; they are nothing more nor less than tribute paid to the serf owners for emancipating their slaves. We shall put forward the demand for the immediate and complete abolition of compensation payments, the abolition of all quit-rents, and the demand for the return of the hundreds of millions which the tsarist government has extorted from the peasants to satisfy the greed of the slave owners. There is talk about the peasants not having sufficient land, about the need

for state aid in providing the peasants with more land. Our reply to this is: it is *precisely because* of state aid (aid to the landlords, of course) that the peasants in such an enormous number of cases were deprived of land that was vitally necessary to them. We shall put forward the demand for the restoration to the peasantry of the land of which they were deprived and the lack of which still keeps them in a state of bondage and forced labour, *i.e.*, actually in a state of serfdom. We shall put forward the demand for the establishment of peasant committees, which will remove the crying injustices committed against the emancipated slaves by the committees of the nobles set up by the tsarist government. We shall demand the establishment of land courts, which will have the right to reduce the excessively high rents extorted from the peasants by the landlords by taking advantage of their hopeless position. Before these courts the peasants will have the right to prosecute for usury all those who take advantage of their extreme need to impose extortionate terms upon them. We shall take advantage of every opportunity to explain to the peasantry that the people who talk to them about the tutelage or the aid of the present state are either fools or charlatans, and their worst enemies; that what the peasants stand in need of most is relief from the tyranny and oppression of the officials; that their complete and absolute equality in all respects with all other classes must be recognised; that they must obtain complete liberty to migrate and move freely from place to place, the liberty to dispose of their lands as they please and the liberty to manage their own communal affairs and freely to dispose of the communal revenues. The most common facts in the life of any Russian village provide a thousand themes for agitation on behalf of the above demands. This agitation must be based upon the local, concrete and most pressing needs of the peasantry; they must not be confined to these needs, however, but must be steadily directed towards widening the outlook of the peasantry, towards developing their political consciousness. The peasants must be made to understand the special place occupied in the state by the landlords and the peasants respectively, and

they must be taught that the only way to emancipate the countryside from the tyranny and oppression that reigns in it is to convene an assembly of representatives of the people and to overthrow the tyranny of the officials. It is absurd and stupid to assert that the demands for political liberty would not be understood by the workers: not only the workers who have experienced years of direct fighting with the factory employers and the police, who constantly witness the arbitrary arrests and persecution of their best fighters, not only these workers who are already infected with socialism, but every intelligent peasant who thinks at all about the things he sees going on around him will understand what the workers are fighting for, and will understand the significance of the *Zemsky Sobor*¹ which will emancipate the whole country from the tyranny of the hated officials. Agitation on the basis of the direct and most urgent needs of the peasants will fulfill its purpose, i.e., carry the class war into the countryside, only when it succeeds in combining every exposure of some "economic" evil with definite political demands.

But the question arises whether the Social-Democratic Labour Party can include in its programme demands like those referred to above. Can it undertake to carry on agitation among the peasantry? Will it not lead to the scattering and diversion of our revolutionary forces, which are not very numerous as it is, from the principal and only reliable channel of the movement?

Such objections are based on a misunderstanding. We must unfailingly include in our programme demands for the emancipation of our countryside from all the survivals of slavery, demands capable of rousing among the best section of the peasantry, if not an independent political struggle, then at all events a readiness consciously to support the working class struggle for emancipation. We would be committing a mistake if we advocated measures which may retard social development, or artificially isolate the small peasantry from the growth of capitalism, from the development of large-scale production; but it would be a much more fatal mistake if we failed to utilise the labour movement for the purpose of spreading among the peas-

¹ National Assembly.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

antry the democratic demands which the Reform of February 19, 1861, failed to carry out because it was distorted by the landlords and the officials. Our Party must include such demands in its programme if it desires to take the lead of the whole people in the struggle against the autocracy.¹ But to include these points in our programme does not imply that we shall transfer the active revolutionary forces from the towns to the villages. Such a thing cannot even be thought of. Undoubtedly all the fighting elements of the Party must strive to go to the towns and industrial centres; only the industrial proletariat is capable of conducting a determined and mass struggle against the autocracy, only the industrial proletariat is capable of employing such methods of struggle as organising public demonstrations, or of issuing a regularly and widely circulated, *popular* political newspaper. We must include peasant demands in our programme not in order to transfer convinced Social-Democrats from the towns to the countryside, not in order to chain them to the village, but in order to guide the activities of those forces which *cannot* find an outlet anywhere except in the rural districts, in order to utilise for the cause of democracy, and for the political struggle for liberty, those ties with the rural districts which, owing to the force of circumstances, are maintained by not a few loyal Social-Democratic intellectuals and workers—ties which necessarily will grow and are growing with the growth of the movement. We have long since outgrown the stage when we were a small detachment of volunteers, when the reserves of Social-Democratic forces consisted merely of circles of young men who had all “gone among the workers.” Our movement now has a whole army at its command, an army of workers, stirred by the struggle for socialism and for liberty—an army of the intelligentsia who have been taking part in the movement, and who are already scattered over the whole length and breadth of Russia—an army of sympathisers whose eyes are

¹ We have already drafted a Social-Democratic programme which includes the above-mentioned demands. We hope—after this draft has been discussed and amended in conjunction with the Emancipation of Labour group—to publish it as the draft programme of our Party in one of our forthcoming issues.

turned with faith and hope upon the labour movement, and who are prepared to render it a thousand services. We are confronted with the great task of organising this army in such a manner as will enable us not only to organise transient outbreaks, not only to strike casual and sporadic (and therefore not dangerous) blows at the enemy, but also to pursue the enemy steadily and persistently, in a determined struggle along the whole line, to harass the autocratic government wherever it sows oppression and gathers a harvest of hatred. Can this aim be achieved without sowing the seeds of the class struggle and political consciousness among the many millions of the peasantry? Do not say it is impossible to sow these seeds among the peasantry! It is not only possible, it is already being done in a thousand ways which escape our attention and influence.

This will proceed much more widely and rapidly when we succeed in issuing slogans that will enable us to exercise this influence, and when we unfurl the banner of the emancipation of the Russian peasantry from all the survivals of shameful serfdom. Country people who come into the towns already look with wonder, curiosity and interest upon the struggle of the workers that is going on there, a struggle which is unintelligible to them; and they carry the news of the struggle to the most remote parts of the country. We can and must do our very best to convert the curiosity of spectators, if not into complete understanding, then at least into a vague consciousness that the workers are fighting for the interests of the whole people, and into increased sympathy for the struggle. And when that is done, the day of victory of the revolutionary party over the police government will come more quickly than we ourselves ever expected or even guessed.

April 1901.

TO THE RURAL POOR *

AN EXPLANATION FOR THE PEASANTS OF WHAT THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS WANT

1. THE STRUGGLE OF THE WORKERS IN THE TOWNS

MANY peasants must have heard by now of the labour disturbances in the towns. Some of them have themselves lived in St. Petersburg or Moscow and worked in the factories and seen the riots, as the police call them. Others have met workers who took part in the disturbances and were deported by the authorities back to their villages. Others again must have seen the leaflets issued by the workers, or books about the workers' struggle. Still others have only heard the stories about what is going on in the towns from people who have travelled about.

At first it was only the students who rebelled, but now thousands and tens of thousands of workers have risen in all the larger towns. In most cases their fight is against their employers, against the manufacturers, against the capitalists. The workers declare strikes, all the workers at the factory stop work at the same time, demanding higher wages and demanding that instead of being made to work eleven or ten hours a day they should work no more than eight hours. The workers also demand other things that would make the workingman's life less hard. They want the workshops to be in better condition, and the machines to be protected by special appliances so as to prevent them from maiming the workers, they want their children to be able to go to school, and the sick to be given proper aid in the hospitals, they want the homes of the workers to be like human dwellings instead of being like dogs' kennels.

But the police interfere with the workers' struggle. The police seize the workers, throw them into prison, and deport them without trial back to their villages or even to Siberia. The govern-

ment makes laws forbidding strikes and workers' meetings. But the workers go on with their fight against the police and against the government. The workers say: we millions of working people have bent our backs long enough! We have worked for the rich and remained paupers long enough! We have allowed them to rob us long enough! We wish to combine to form unions, to unite the workers in one big workers' association (a workers' party) and to unite our forces to obtain a better life. We are striving to obtain a new and better order of society: in this new and better society there shall be neither rich nor poor; all will have to work. No longer will a handful of rich men enjoy the fruits of common toil; all the working people will enjoy them. Machinery and other improvements will no longer serve to enrich the few at the expense of millions and tens of millions of people, but will contribute to make work easier for all. This new and better kind of society is called *socialist society*. The teachings of this society are called *socialism*. The associations of the workers which fight for this better society are called *Social-Democratic* parties. In almost every country (except Russia and Turkey) there is such a party which exists openly. In Russia the workers, together with Socialists from among the educated people, have also formed such a party; it is called the *R.S.D.L.P.*

The government persecutes the Party, but the Party exists in secret, in spite of all prohibitions; it publishes newspapers and books and organises secret societies. The workers not only meet in secret, they come out into the streets in crowds, they unfurl their banners bearing the inscriptions: "Long live the eight-hour day! Long live freedom, long live socialism!" The government savagely persecutes the workers for this. It even sends troops to fire on the workers. Russian soldiers have killed Russian workers in Yaroslavl, in St. Petersburg, in Riga, in Rostov-on-Don and in Zlatoust.

But the workers do not surrender. They continue the fight. They say: neither persecution, nor prison, nor deportations, nor penal servitude, nor death can make us afraid. Our cause is a just cause. We are fighting for the freedom and the happiness

of all who work. We are fighting to abolish violence and oppression, to put an end to the poverty of tens and hundreds of millions of people. The workers are becoming more and more class conscious. The number of Social-Democrats is growing fast in all countries. We shall win in spite of all persecution.

The rural poor must clearly understand what sort of people these Social-Democrats are, what it is they want and what the rural poor must do if they want to help the Social-Democrats to win happiness for the people.

2. WHAT DO THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS WANT?

The Social-Democrats are out first and foremost to win *political liberty*. They need political liberty in order to unite all the Russian workers in broad and open associations for the struggle for a new and better order of society, for a socialist society.

What is political liberty?

To understand this the peasant must begin by comparing his present state of freedom with serfdom. Under serfdom a peasant could not even marry without the landlord's permission. Today the peasant is free to marry without anyone's permission. Under serfdom the peasant had to work for his landlord on the days fixed by the latter's bailiff. Today the peasant is free to choose the employer he will work for, the days he will work on, and for what wages. Under serfdom the peasant could not leave his village without the landlord's permission. Today the peasant is free to go wherever he pleases—if the *mir*¹ allows him to go, if he is not in arrears with his taxes, if he can get a passport and if the governor or the police do not forbid migrations. This means that even today the peasant is not quite free to go where he pleases, that he does not possess complete freedom of movement: the peasant is still a semi-serf. Presently we shall explain in detail why the Russian peasant is still a semi-serf and what he must do to change his condition.

Under serfdom the peasant had no right to acquire property without the landlord's permission, and could not buy land. Today the peasant is free to acquire any kind of property (but

¹ The village community.—Ed. Eng. ed.

even today he is not free to leave the *mir* or to dispose of his land as he pleases). Under serfdom the peasant could be flogged by the landlord. Today the peasant cannot be flogged by the landlord, although he is still liable to corporal punishment.

This freedom is called *civil* liberty—freedom in family matters, in private matters, in matters of property. The peasant and the worker are free (although not quite free) to arrange their family life and their private business as they please, freely to dispose of their labour (choose their employer) and of their property.

But neither the Russian workers nor the Russian people as a whole are yet free to settle their *national* affairs as they please. Just as the peasants used to be the serfs of individual landlords, so the people as a whole is the serf of the government officials. The Russian people have not the right to choose their officials, nor the right to elect representatives to legislate for the whole country. The Russian people have not even the right to meet to discuss *state* affairs. We cannot even print newspapers or books, we cannot even speak to all and for all on matters of the state unless we get permission from the officials who have been put in authority over us without our consent, just as the landlord used to appoint his bailiffs without the consent of the peasants!

Just as the peasants used to be the slaves of the landlords, so the Russian people are still the slaves of the officials. Just as the peasants under serfdom were deprived of civil liberty, so the Russian people are still deprived of *political* liberty. Political liberty means the freedom of the people to settle affairs relating to the people as a whole, to the state. Political liberty means the right of the people to elect councillors (deputies) to represent them in a State Duma (parliament). All laws should be discussed and passed, all taxes and dues should be fixed only by such a State Duma (parliament) elected by the whole people. Political liberty means the right of the people to choose their own officials, to call any meetings they please for the discussion of all the affairs of state, to publish whatever papers and books they please, without having to ask for permission.

All the other European peoples won political liberty for them-

selves long ago. Only in Turkey and in Russia are the people still politically the slaves of the sultan's government and of the government of the autocratic tsar. The tsar's autocracy means the unlimited power of the tsar. The people play no part in the constitution of the state or in the administration of the state. All the laws are made and all the officials are appointed by the tsar alone, by his personal, unlimited autocratic authority. But of course the tsar *cannot* know all the Russian laws or all the Russian officials. The tsar cannot know all that goes on in the country. The tsar simply endorses the will of a few score of the biggest and most important officials. However much he may want to, one man cannot govern an enormous country like Russia. It is not the tsar that governs Russia; to say: autocracy is government by one man, is merely uttering a phrase. Russia is governed by a handful of the richest and most highborn officials. The tsar learns only that which this handful is pleased to tell him. The tsar is quite powerless to go against the will of this handful of nobles of high rank: the tsar himself is a landlord and one of the nobility; from his earliest childhood he has been surrounded by these highborn people, and only by them; it was they who brought him up and educated him; what he knows of the rest of the Russian people is only what these noble gentry know, what these rich landlords and the few very rich merchants who are received at the tsar's court know.

In every volost office you will find the same picture hanging on the wall: it depicts the tsar, Alexander III (the father of the present tsar), speaking to the volost headmen who have come to his coronation. The tsar is saying to them: "*Obey your marshals of the nobility.*" And the present tsar, Nicholas II, has repeated these words. This means that the tsars themselves admit that they can only govern the country with the aid of the nobility and through the nobility. We must firmly remember these words of the tsar's about the peasants having to obey the gentry. We must clearly realise that those who depict the tsarist government as the best government are liars. In other countries—these people say—the government is elected; but it is the rich who are elected, and they govern unjustly and oppress the poor.

In Russia the government is not elected; an autocratic tsar governs the country. The tsar stands above everyone, above rich and poor. The tsar, they tell us, is just to everyone, to the poor and rich alike.

Such talk is mere humbug. Every Russian knows the kind of justice that is dispensed by our government. Everyone knows whether a plain workingman or a peasant labourer can become a member of the State Council.* In all other European countries factory workers and farmhands are members of the State Duma (parliament); and they can freely speak to all the people about the miserable condition of the workers, and call upon the workers to unite and to fight for better conditions. And no one dare stop these speeches of the people's representatives, no policeman dare lay a finger on them.**

Russia has no representative government, and it is not merely the rich and the highborn who govern her, but the worst of these. She is governed by those who are best at intriguing at the tsar's court, who are cleverest at mischief-making, who carry lies and slanders to the tsar, who flatter him and toady to him. They govern in secret; the people do not know and cannot know what new laws are being prepared, what wars are being hatched, what new taxes are being introduced, which officials are being rewarded and for what services, and which are being dismissed. In no country is there such a multitude of officials as in Russia. the officials tower above the voiceless people like a dense forest—a mere workingman can never make his way through this forest, can never obtain justice. No complaint against the bribery, the robbery or the violence of the officials is ever brought to light; every complaint is smothered in official red tape. The voice of an isolated man can never reach the people, it is lost in the dense thickets, it is stifled in the police torture chamber. An army of officials, who were never elected by the people and who are not responsible to the people, has woven a thick web, and men and women are struggling in this web like flies.

The tsarist autocracy is an autocracy of officials. The tsarist autocracy means the feudal dependence of the people upon the officials and especially upon the police. The tsarist autocracy is police autocracy.

This is why the workers come out into the streets with banners bearing the inscriptions: "Down with the autocracy!" "Long live political liberty!" This is why the tens of millions of the village poor must support and take up this battle cry of the urban workers. Like them, regardless of all persecution, of all the enemy's threats and violence, and undeterred by the first reverses, the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants must come forward for a decisive struggle for the freedom of the whole of the Russian people and demand first of all the *convocation of the representatives of the people*. Let the people themselves throughout the length and breadth of Russia elect their councillors (deputies). Let these councillors form a supreme assembly, which will introduce representative government in Russia, free the people from serfdom to the officials and the police, secure for the people the right to meet freely, to speak freely and to have a free press.

This is what the Social-Democrats want first and foremost. This is the meaning of their first demand, the *demand for political liberty*.

We know that political liberty, free elections to the State Duma (parliament), freedom of meetings, freedom of the press, will not deliver the working people from poverty and oppression at one stroke. There is no recipe for delivering the poor of town and country at one stroke from the burden of working for the rich. The working people have no one to place their hopes in and no one to rely upon *but themselves*. No one will free the workingman from poverty *unless he frees himself*. And to free themselves the workers of the whole country, of the whole of Russia, must unite to form one association, one party. But millions of workers cannot unite if the autocratic police government forbids all meetings, all working class newspapers, the election of workers' delegates. To unite they must have the right to form any association they please, they must have the right of combination, they must have political liberty.

Political liberty will not deliver the working people from poverty all at once, *but it will give the workers a weapon with which to fight poverty*. There is no other means and there can

be no other means of fighting poverty except the *unification of the workers*. But millions of people cannot unite unless there is *political liberty*.

In all European countries where the people have won political liberty the workers began to unite long ago. Throughout the whole of Europe, workers who own no land and no workshops, who work for other people for wages all their lives, are called *proletarians*. Over fifty years ago the first call was sounded for the working people to unite. "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" During the past fifty years these words have sounded and resounded all over the world, they are repeated at tens and hundreds of thousands of workers' meetings, they can be read in millions of Social-Democratic books and papers in every language in the world.

Of course, it is no easy task to unite millions of workers in one association, one party—it requires time, persistence, tenacity and courage. The workers are ground down by poverty, numbed by endless drudgery for the capitalists and landlords, often they have not even the time to think of why they remain eternal paupers or how to be delivered from this. Everything is done to prevent the workers from uniting: either by means of direct and brutal violence, as in countries like Russia where there is no political liberty, or by refusing to employ workers who preach the doctrines of socialism, or by means of deceit and corruption. But no violence, no persecution will stop the proletarian workers from fighting for the great cause of the emancipation of all the working people from poverty and oppression. The number of workers who are Social-Democrats is constantly growing. Take Germany, which is a neighbour of ours; there they have representative government. Formerly, Germany, too, was an unlimited autocratic monarchy. But more than fifty years ago the German people destroyed autocracy—and won political liberty by force. In Germany laws are no longer made by a handful of officials, as they are in Russia; they are made by an *assembly elected by the people*, by a parliament, by the Reichstag, as the Germans call it. All adult males take part in electing deputies to this assembly. This makes it possible to count

how many votes are cast for the Social-Democrats. In 1887 *one-tenth* of all the votes were cast for the Social-Democrats. In 1898 (the date of the last elections to the Reichstag) the number of Social-Democratic votes was *almost three times greater: more than one-fourth* of all the votes were cast for the Social-Democrats. Over *two million* adult males voted for *Social-Democratic parliamentary candidates*. Among the farm labourers of Germany socialism is not yet widespread; but it is making very rapid progress among them. And when the masses of farmhands, day labourers and poor, pauperised peasants unite with their brothers in the towns, the German workers will win and establish conditions in which there will be neither poverty nor oppression for the toilers.

By what means do the Social-Democratic workers intend to deliver the people from poverty?

To know how to do this, one must clearly understand the cause of the poverty of the immense masses of the people under the present social order. Great cities are growing, magnificent stores and houses are being built, railways are being constructed, all kinds of machinery and improvements are being introduced in industry and in agriculture, but millions of people remain destitute, continue to work all their lives to provide a bare living for their families. That is not all: more and more people are becoming unemployed. Both in town and country there are more and more people who can find no work at all. In the villages they starve, in the towns they swell the ranks of the "gold gangs" and "barefoot gangs,"¹ they find refuge like beasts in dugouts on the outskirts of the town or in dreadful slums and cellars such as those in the Khitrov Market in Moscow.

Why is this? Wealth and luxury are increasing all the time while the millions and millions who by their labour create all this wealth remain in poverty and destitution! The peasants are dying of starvation, the workers wander about workless, while traders export millions of poods of corn from Russia to foreign countries, and factories are closed down because the goods cannot be sold, there is no market for them!

¹The nickname given to the "down and outs," the lumpen proletariat.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

The cause of all this is, first of all, that most of the land, all the factories, workshops, machinery, buildings, ships, etc., belong to a small number of rich people. Tens of millions of people work on this land and in these factories and workshops, but they are all owned by some tens of thousands of rich people, landlords, merchants and manufacturers. The people work for these rich men for wages, for a crust of bread. All that is produced over and above what is required to provide a bare living for the workers goes to the rich owners; it constitutes their profit, their "income." All the benefits arising from the use of machinery and the improvements in the methods of production go to the landlords and the capitalists: they accumulate countless riches, while the workers get nothing but a few wretched crumbs. The workers are brought together to work: as many as several hundred or even several thousand workers may work on a large estate or in a large factory. When labour is brought together in this way and when this is accompanied by the use of machinery, work becomes much more productive; a single worker begins to produce much more than several dozen workers used to produce when working separately and without any machinery. It is not the toilers, but the big landowners, the merchants and manufacturers—an insignificant number of people—who profit by labour becoming more productive.

One often hears it said that a landlord or a merchant "gives work" to the people or that he "gives" a job to the poor. It is often said, for instance, that a neighbouring factory or a neighbouring landlord "feeds" the local peasants. But in reality it is the workers who feed themselves by their labour, and in addition feed all those who do not work. *But in order to obtain permission* to work on the landlord's land, in a factory or on a railway, the worker must *give* the owner all that he produces, while the worker himself gets only a meagre pittance. So that in actual fact it is not the landlords and the merchants who give work to the workers, but the workers who maintain everyone by their labour, by surrendering the greater part of the results of their labour for nothing.

Further, in all modern countries the poverty of the people is

due to the fact that all the articles produced by the workers are produced for sale, for the market. Whatever the manufacturer and the artisan, the landlord and the well-to-do peasant produce, the livestock they breed, or the corn they sow and gather in, is produced to be *sold*, to be turned into *money*. Money has everywhere become the ruling power. All the goods produced by the labour of man can be exchanged for money. Money can even buy men, that is to say, it can force a man who owns nothing to work for another who has money. In former times, under serfdom, land used to be the ruling power; whoever possessed land possessed power and authority. Now it is money, capital, that has become the ruling power. Money will buy all the land you like. Unless you have money land is of little use to you: for you want money to buy a plough or other implements, to buy livestock, to buy clothes and other goods in the towns, not to speak of paying taxes. Because they want money nearly all the landlords mortgage their land to a bank. To get money the government borrows from the rich men and the bankers of all the world, and pays millions of rubles yearly in interest on these loans.

For the sake of money everyone today is waging a fierce war against everyone else. Each tries to buy cheap and to sell dear, each tries to outdo the other, to sell as much of his wares as he can, to underbid the other, to conceal from him a profitable market or a profitable order. In this general scramble for money it is the small man, the small artisan, or the small peasant, who fares worst: he is always beaten by the big merchant or the rich peasant. The small man never has any reserves; he lives from hand to mouth; the first difficulty, the first accident, compels him to pawn his last belongings or to sell his livestock dirt cheap. Having fallen into the hands of a kulak or of a money lender, he very rarely succeeds in extricating himself from his clutches: in most cases he is utterly ruined. Every year tens and hundreds of thousands of small peasants and artisans lock up their cottages, surrender their holdings to the community, and become wage labourers, farmhands, unskilled workers, proletarians. Meanwhile, in this scramble for money, the rich grow

richer and richer. They pile up millions and hundreds of millions of rubles in the banks; and besides their own money, the money deposited in the banks by others also helps them to become rich. The small man will deposit a few score or a few hundred rubles in a bank or a savings bank and be paid interest at the rate of three or four kopeks on the ruble; the rich man will make millions out of these scores and hundreds, he will use these millions to enlarge his turnover, and make ten and twenty kopeks on the ruble.

This being the case, the Social-Democratic workers say that the only way to put an end to the poverty of the people is to change the existing order from top to bottom and to introduce a *socialist order*: in other words, to take the land from the big landowners, the factories from the manufacturers, the money capital from the bankers, to abolish *private property* and hand it all over to the toilers of the whole country. When this is done the rich who live by the labour of others will no longer command the labour of the workers; this will be done by the workers themselves and by persons elected by them. Then the fruits of united labour and the benefits that arise from improvements and machinery will go to all the toilers, all the workers. Wealth will begin to grow at a still faster rate because, when they have to work for themselves and not for the capitalists, the workers will work better, the working day will be shorter, the workers' standard of living will be higher, all their conditions of life will become completely changed.

But it is not an easy matter to change the existing order in the whole of our country. This requires a great deal of work and much stubborn fighting. All the rich, all the propertied people, all the *bourgeoisie*¹ will defend their riches with all their might. The officials and the army will rise to defend the *rich class*, because the government itself is in the hands of the

¹ Bourgeois means an owner of property. The bourgeoisie are all the owners of property taken together. A big bourgeois is the owner of big property. A petty bourgeois is the owner of small property. The words bourgeoisie and proletariat mean owners and workers, the rich and the poor, or those who live by the labour of others and those who work for others for wages.

rich class. The workers must rally as one man for the fight against all those who live by the labour of others; the workers must become united and help to unite all the poor into a single *working class*, a single *class* of the *proletariat*. The struggle will not be an easy one for the working class, but it is bound to end in the victory of the workers, because the bourgeoisie, the people who live by the labour of others, are an insignificant minority of the population, while the working class is the great majority. Workers against property owners means millions against thousands.

The workers in Russia are already uniting for this struggle in a single Social-Democratic Labour Party. Difficult as it may be to unite in secret, hiding from the police, nevertheless, the organisation is growing and becoming stronger. When the Russian people have won political liberty the work of uniting the working class, the cause of socialism, will march forward much more rapidly, more rapidly than among the German workers.

3. RICHES AND POVERTY. OWNERS AND WORKERS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

We know now what the Social-Democrats want. They want to fight the rich class to free the people from poverty. There is quite as much poverty in the country as in the towns, or even more. We need not speak here about how great the poverty in the country is. Every worker who has been in the country and every peasant knows quite well how poor, how hungry, cold and impoverished the countryside is.

But the peasant does not know *what makes him* miserable, hungry and impoverished, or *how* to rid himself of his poverty. To know this we must first ascertain what causes want and poverty in town and country. We have already dealt with this briefly, and we have seen that the poor peasants and the agricultural labourers must unite with the urban workers. But this is not enough. We must ascertain what sort of people in the villages will take the side of the rich, of the owners, and what sort of people will take the side of the workers, of the Social-Democrats. We must ascertain whether there are many peasants

besides the landlords who can acquire capital and live by the labour of others. Unless we get to the bottom of this matter, no amount of talking about poverty will be of any use, and the rural poor will never be able to understand *which* people in the villages must unite among themselves and with the urban workers, and *what must be done* to make the alliance a *true one* and to prevent the peasant from being cheated by his own kind, the rich peasant, as well as by the landlord.

To ascertain this let us enquire how strong the landlords are and how strong the rich peasants are in the country.

Let us begin with the landlords. We can judge of their power by the amount of land they own. The total amount of land in European Russia, including peasant allotment land and privately owned land, was calculated at 240,000,000 dessiatins¹ (except the crown lands of which we will speak separately). Out of this total of 240,000,000 dessiatins, 131,000,000 dessiatins are held by the peasants, that is to say, by *over 10,000,000 families*; whereas 109,000,000 dessiatins are held by private owners, *i.e., by less than half a million families*. So that if we figure out the average, we shall find that every peasant family has 13 dessiatins, while every family of private owners has 218 dessiatins! But as we shall presently see, the land is distributed still more unequally.

Of the 109,000,000 dessiatins owned by private owners *seven million* are *appanage lands*, in other words, they are the private property of the members of the imperial family. The tsar and his family are the first landlords, the biggest landlords, in Russia. *One family possesses more land than half a million peasant families!* Further, the churches and monasteries own about *six million* dessiatins of land. Our priests preach frugality and abstinence to the peasants, but they themselves have, by fair means and foul, accumulated an enormous amount of land.

Another two million dessiatins are owned by the cities and

¹ These and all subsequent figures concerning the amount of land are very much out of date. They refer to the years 1877-78. But we have no more up-to-date figures. The Russian government can only survive by living in the dark, and that is why complete and truthful information about the life of the people in the whole country is so rarely collected in our country.

towns, and about an equal amount by various commercial and industrial companies and corporations. Ninety-two million dessiatins (the exact figure is 91,605,845, but to simplify matters we will quote round figures) belong to *less than half a million* (481,358) families of private owners. Half these families are quite small owners, owning less than ten dessiatins of land each, and all of them together own less than one million dessiatins. On the other hand, *sixteen thousand* families own more than one thousand dessiatins each; and the total land owned by them amounts to *sixty-five million* dessiatins. What boundless areas of land are concentrated in the hands of the big landowners is seen from the fact that *just under one thousand families* (924) own *more than ten thousand dessiatins* each and all together they own *twenty-seven million dessiatins* between them! One thousand families own as much land as is owned by two million peasant families.

It is clear that millions and tens of millions of people are *bound* to live in the greatest distress and starvation, and they will *go on* starving and living in the greatest distress as long as such boundless areas of land are owned by a few thousand rich families. It is clear that the state authorities, the government (even a tsar's government), will always dance to the tune of these big landowners. It is clear that the rural poor can expect no help from anyone or from any quarter as long as they do not unite as a single class in order to wage a fierce and stubborn fight against the landlord class.

At this point we must observe that very many people (including many educated people) have a completely mistaken view of the power of the landlord class; they say that the "state" owns still more land. "Even now," say these bad counsellors of the peasant, "a large portion of the territory [*i.e.*, of all the land] of Russia belongs to the state." (These words are taken from the newspaper *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*, No. 8, p. 8.) Their mistake arises from the following: they have heard that the state owns 150,000,000 dessiatins of land in European Russia. That is true. But they forget that these 150,000,000 dessiatins consist almost entirely of *unproductive land and forests in the Far North*, in

the Archangel, Vologda, Olonets, Vyatka and Perm gubernias. You see that the state has only retained that land which up to the present has been quite unfit for cultivation. The productive land owned by the state amounts to less than four million dessiatins. And these productive state lands (for example, in the Samara Gubernia, where they are particularly large) are leased for very low rents, for less than nothing, to the rich. The rich rent thousands and tens of thousands of dessiatins of these lands and sublet them to the peasants at exorbitant rents.

The people who say that the state owns a great deal of land are very bad counsellors of the peasant. What is really the case is that the big private owners (including the tsar) own a lot of good land, and the state itself is in the hands of these big owners. As long as the rural poor do not unite and by uniting thus become a formidable force, the "state" will remain the obedient servant of the landlord class. There is one more thing we must not forget: formerly, practically all the landlords were nobles. The nobility still owns an enormous amount of land (in 1877-78, 115,000 nobles owned 73,000,000 dessiatins). But today money, capital, has become the ruling power. Merchants and well-to-do peasants have bought very large tracts of land. It is estimated that in the course of thirty years (from 1863 to 1892) the net loss (*i.e.*, the excess of sales over purchases) of land by the nobility amounted to over 600,000,000 rubles. And merchants and honorary citizens have bought land to the value of 250,000,000 rubles. Peasants, Cossacks and "other rural inhabitants" (as our government calls the common folk, to distinguish them from the "nobles" and the "clean public") have bought land to the value of 300,000,000 rubles. This means that on an average every year the peasants, in the whole of Russia, acquire land in freehold to the value of 10,000,000 rubles.

You see that there are different sorts of peasants: there are the peasants who are poor and starve; and there are those who become rich. It follows that the number of rich peasants, who want to keep up with the landlords and who will take the side of the rich against the workers, is increasing. The rural poor who wish to unite with the urban workers must very carefully

consider and ascertain how many peasants of this kind there are, how strong they are and the sort of association that is required to fight this force. We have just mentioned the bad counsellors of the peasant. These bad counsellors are fond of saying that the peasants have such an association already, namely, the *mir*, the village community. The *mir*, they say, is a great force. The *mir* unites the peasants very closely; the organisation of the peasants in the *mir* is colossal (*i.e.*, enormous, boundless).

This is wrong. It is a fairy tale. A fairy tale invented by kind-hearted people, but a fairy tale nevertheless. If we listen to fairy tales we shall only wreck our cause, the cause of uniting the rural poor with the urban workers. Let every rural inhabitant look around attentively: is the *mir*, the peasant community, at all like an association of the poor to fight *all* the rich, *all* those who live by the labour of others? No, it is not and it cannot be. In every village, in every community, there are many labourers, many pauperised peasants, and by their side there are rich peasants who employ labourers and buy land "in perpetuity." These rich peasants are also members of the community and it is they who boss the community because they have all the power. Is this what we want, an association the members of which include the rich, and in which the rich are the bosses? Certainly not. We want an association *to fight* the rich. So the *mir* is no good to us at all.

What we want is a voluntary association, an association of people who have realised that they must unite with the urban workers. The village community is not a voluntary, but an official association. The village community does not consist of people who work for the rich and who want to unite to fight the rich. The village community consists of all sorts of people, not because they want to be in it, but because their parents lived on the same land and worked for the same landlord, because the authorities have registered them as members of that community. The poor peasants are not free to leave the community; they are not free to receive a stranger into the community. We, our association, may require a man in our village, but the police have registered him as belonging to another volost, and so he

cannot join. No, it is a very different kind of association we want; we want a voluntary association consisting of none but workers and poor peasants to fight all those who live by the labour of others.

The times when the *mir* used to be a force have long passed, never to return. The *mir* was a force when hardly any of the peasants were landless labourers or workers wandering over the length and breadth of Russia in search of a job, and when there were hardly any rich peasants, when all were equally ground down by the serfowning landlords. But now money has become the principal power. Members of the same community will now fight each other for money like wild beasts. The moneyed peasants are sometimes even better at bullying and fleecing their fellow peasants than the landlords. What we want today is not the association of the *mir*, but an association directed against the *power of money*, against the rule of capital, an association of all the rural labourers and all the poor peasants of different communities, the unity of all the rural poor with the urban workers to fight the landlords and the rich peasants without distinction.

We have seen the power of the landlords. We must now try to ascertain how many rich peasants there are and what their power is.

We measured the power of the landlords by the size of their estates, by the amount of land they own. The landlords are free to dispose of their land as they please, they are free to buy land and to sell it. That is why it is possible to judge their power very accurately by the amount of land they own. The peasants, on the other hand, still lack the right freely to dispose of their land, they are still semi-serfs, tied to their village community. Hence it is impossible to judge the power of the rich peasants by the amount of allotment land they hold. It is not the allotment that makes the rich peasants rich; they also *buy* a considerable amount of land, they buy it "in perpetuity" (*i.e.*, in freehold) and "for a number of years" (*i.e.*, on lease), they buy it from the landlords and from their fellow peasants, from those peasants who abandon their land, whom necessity forces to lease

their holdings. For these reasons, it is best to distinguish the rich, the middle and the poor peasants according to the number of horses they own. A peasant who has many horses will nearly always be a rich peasant: if he keeps a lot of draught animals it shows that he cultivates much land and owns land besides his communal allotment, and has money saved up. Now we are in a position to calculate the number of peasants owning many horses in the whole of Russia (European Russia, not including Siberia or the Caucasus). Of course it must be borne in mind that we can speak of the whole of Russia only in round figures: the different uyezds and gubernias vary to a considerable degree. For instance, in the neighbourhood of cities we often find rich peasant farmers who do not keep many horses. Some of them engage in market gardening—a very profitable business—others do not keep many horses but keep cows and sell milk. In all parts of Russia there are also peasants who do not make money out of the land, but engage in trade: they run oil mills, hulling mills and other enterprises. Anyone who has lived in the country has known rich peasants in his own village or in the district. But what we have to do is to ascertain how many there are in the whole of Russia, and what power they possess, so that the poor peasant shall not have to guess and go about blindfolded, as it were, but that he may know to a certainty who his friends and foes are.

Now then, let us see how many peasants there are who are rich and how many who are poor in horses. We have already said that in the whole of Russia there are about 10,000,000 peasant households. Between them they own, probably, some 15,000,000 horses (fourteen years ago or so the number was 17,000,000, but it has become less since). This means that on an average every *ten* households had *fifteen* horses. But the whole point is that some of them—they are few—own many horses while others—and they are many—either own no horses, or very few. There are *at least three million* horseless peasants, and about three and a half million *owning only one horse*. All these peasants are either utterly destitute or very poor. We call these the rural poor. They number *six and a half million* out of a

total of ten million, that is to say, *almost two-thirds!* Next come the middle peasants who own a pair of horses each. These peasants number *about two million* households, with *about four million* horses between them. Then come the rich peasants, each of whom owns more than one pair of horses. These comprise *one and a half million* households, but between them they own *seven and a half million horses*.¹ This means that about one-sixth of the total number of households own half the total number of horses.

Now that we know this we are in a position to judge fairly accurately the power of the rich peasants. Their number is not great: according to the different communities and volosts they will muster from ten to twenty households in every hundred. But these households, although they are few, are the richest. Taking Russia as a whole, they own almost as many horses as all the other peasants put together. This means that the acreage sown by them must also amount to nearly half the total acreage sown by the peasants, and that they gather in much more corn than they require for the needs of their families. They sell large quantities of corn. They grow corn not merely to feed themselves, they grow it chiefly to sell and to make money. Peasants like these can save money. They deposit it in savings banks and banks. They buy land in freehold. We have already seen how much land is bought every year by the peasants; nearly all this land goes to these rich peasants. The rural poor cannot think of buying land, they have as much as they can do

¹ We must repeat that the figures quoted are rough average figures. The number of rich peasants may not be exactly a million and a half, it may very well be a million and a quarter, or a million and three-quarters, or even two million. That would not make very much difference. The essential thing is not to count them up to the last thousand or last hundred thousand, but clearly to realise the strength and the position of the rich peasants so that we may be able to recognise our friends and our enemies, that we may not delude ourselves by stories and empty talk, but accurately calculate the position of the poor and the position of the rich respectively.

Let every rural worker carefully study his own volost and the neighbouring volosts. He will see that we have counted correctly, and that, on an average, this will be the position everywhere: out of every hundred households there will be ten, at the most twenty, rich families, some twenty middle peasants, and all the rest—poor,

to keep themselves from starving. Far from being able to buy land, they often lack money to buy bread. It follows that the banks, and the Peasants' Bank* in particular, do not help all the peasants to buy land (as is sometimes asserted by people who try to delude the peasant, and sometimes by people who are a bit too simple-minded), but only an insignificant number of peasants, only the rich peasants. It follows also that when the above-mentioned bad counsellors of the peasant say that the land is being bought by peasants, that the land is passing from capital to labour, *it is not true*. Land can never pass to labour, *i.e.*, to the poor workingman, because land has to be paid for. And the poor never have any spare cash. The land can only pass to the rich and moneyed peasants, to capital, to those people against whom the rural poor must *fight* in alliance with the urban workers.

The rich peasants not only buy land in perpetuity; they most often take land on lease for a number of years. They prevent the poor from getting the land by renting large plots of land. For example, in one uyezd in the Poltava Gubernia, namely Konstantinograd, the amount of land rented by the rich peasants has been calculated. And what do we see? Out of every fifteen households not more than two rented thirty dessiatins or more. These rich peasants were very few in number, but they held *one-half* of all the land rented, and each of them held on an average *seventy-five dessiatins* of rented land! Or take the Taurida Gubernia, where a calculation was made of how much of the land, which the peasants leased from the state through the *mir*, through the village community, has been grabbed by the rich. It turned out that the rich, who form only *one-fifth* of the total number of households, have grabbed *three-fourths* of the rented land. Everywhere land is divided according to money, and it is only the rich, who are very few, that have the money.

Further, much land is leased out by the peasants themselves. The peasants abandon their holdings because they have no livestock, no seeds, nothing to keep their farms going with. Today even land is of no use unless you have money. For instance, in the Novouzensk Uyezd in the Samara Gubernia, one, even two.

out of every three rich peasant households *rent allotment land* in their own or in a neighbouring community. The peasants who lease out their communal allotments are those who have no horses or only one horse. In the Taurida Gubernia as much as *one-third* of the peasant households lease out allotments. A quarter of a million dessiatins, in other words, *one-fourth* of the total acreage under peasant communal allotments, is leased out. Of this quarter of a million dessiatins, one hundred and fifty thousand dessiatins (three-fifths) is rented by the rich peasants! This too enables us to judge whether the *mir*, the community, is the sort of association that suits the poor. In the village community, he who has money has power. But what we want is an association of the poor of all communities.

All this talk about buying land is only intended to deceive the peasant, and the same is true of the talk about helping the peasant to buy cheap ploughs, harvesters and all sorts of improved machinery. Zemstvo stores and co-operatives are set up, and the peasant is told that improved equipment will improve his conditions. This is all a fraud. All this improved equipment always goes to the rich; the poor get next to nothing. They cannot afford to think of ploughs and harvesters when they have to think of how to keep body and soul together! All this sort of "helping the peasants" is nothing but helping the rich. Of what use will it be to the mass of the poor who have neither land, nor livestock, nor reserves, even if the best equipment becomes cheaper. Here is an example. In one of the districts of the Samara Gubernia all the improved equipment belonging to the poor and to the rich peasants was counted, and it was discovered that *one-fifth* of all the households, *i.e.*, the most well-to-do, owned almost three-fourths of the improved equipment, while the poor—*half* the households—had only *one-thirtieth* of it. Out of a total of 28,000 households, 10,000 were horseless and one-horse peasants; these 10,000 had only *seven* improved implements out of a total of 5,724 improved implements owned by all the peasant households in the district. Seven out of 5,724—that is the share the rural poor receive of all these economic improvements, of all this increase in the number of ploughs and

harvesters which are supposed to help "all the peasantry"! This is what the rural poor must expect from the people who speak of "improving peasant farming."

Finally, one of the main features of the rich peasants is that they *hire farmhands and day labourers*. Like the landlords, the rich peasants also live by the labour of others. Like the landlords they grow rich because the mass of the peasants are ruined and pauperised. Like the landlords they try to squeeze as much work as they can out of their farmhands, and pay them as little as possible. If there were not millions of utterly ruined peasants who are compelled to work for others, compelled to become hired labourers, to sell their labour power—the rich peasants would never be able to exist or to carry on with their farms. There would be no "decayed" allotments for them to pick up, no labourers for them to hire. And in the whole of Russia the million and a half rich peasants certainly hire no less than *one million* farmhands and day labourers. It is clear that in the great fight between the propertied class and the propertyless, between masters and workers, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the rich peasants will take the side of the property owners against the working class.

Now we know the position and the power of the rich peasantry. Let us examine the condition of the rural poor.

We have said that the rural poor comprise the great majority, almost two-thirds of the peasant households of Russia. To begin with, the number of horseless households cannot be less than *three million*—probably more than that today, perhaps three and a half million. Every famine, every failure of the crops ruins tens of thousands of households. The population grows, the land becomes more congested, but all the best land has been grabbed by the landlords and rich peasants. Every year more and more people are ruined, they go to the towns and factories, they seek employment as farmhands, or become unskilled labourers. A horseless peasant is a peasant who has become quite propertyless. He is a proletarian. He lives (lives! it would be truer to say that he does not live but just contrives to keep body and soul together) not by the land, not by his

farm, but *by working for wages*. He is the brother of the town worker. Even land is of no use to the horseless peasant: half the horseless peasants *lease out their allotments* because they are not in a condition to till the land, others surrender them to the community gratis (and sometimes they even have to pay to be allowed to do so!). A horseless peasant sows one dessiatin, or two at the very most. He always has to buy bread part of the year (if he has money to buy it with)—his own crop is never sufficient. The one-horse peasants are not very much better off—and there are three and a half million of them in Russia. Of course, there are exceptions, and we have pointed out that here and there, there are one-horse peasants who are doing middling well, or are even rich. But we are not concerned with exceptions or with any one particular uyezd, but with Russia as a whole. If we take the one-horse peasants as a whole, there can be no doubt that they represent a mass of paupers; even in the agricultural provinces the one-horse peasant sows only three or four dessiatins, rarely as many as five; and his own crop never lasts him the whole year. Even in a favourable year his food is no better than that of a horseless peasant—which means that he is constantly underfed, constantly hungry. His farm is in decay, his livestock are poor and short of fodder, he is not in a condition to till his land properly. The sum which a one-horse peasant in the Voronezh Gubernia, for example, is able to spend on his farm (excluding fodder) is not more than *twenty rubles a year*. (A rich peasant spends *ten times that sum*.) Twenty rubles a year for renting land, for buying livestock, for repairing his wooden plough and other implements, for paying the shepherd, and for everything else! Do you call this farming? It is nothing but misery, nothing but drudgery, nothing but eternal worry. It is natural that some of the one-horse peasants, and not a few, should *lease out their allotments* as well. Even land is of little use to a pauper. He has no money and his land does not even provide him with enough to eat, let alone with money. But money is wanted for everything: for food and for clothes, for the farm, and to pay taxes. In the Voronezh Gubernia, a one-horse peasant, as a rule, has to pay about *eighteen*

rubles a year in taxes alone, whereas he cannot make more than seventy-five rubles a year to meet all his expenses. In these circumstances it would be pure mockery to suggest that he should buy more land, or to talk to him about improved equipment or about agricultural banks: these things were never invented for the poor.

Where is the peasant to get the money from? He has to look for a "job." A one-horse peasant, like a horseless one, keeps himself alive only with the help of a "job." But what does this word "job" mean? It means working for others, working for wages. It means that the one-horse peasant has half ceased to be an independent farmer and has become a hireling, a proletarian. That is why such peasants are described as *semi-proletarians*. They, too, are the brothers of the town workers because they, too, are fleeced in every way by the employers. They, too, have no way out, no salvation, except by uniting with the Social-Democrats to fight all the rich, all the property owners. Who works on the building of railways? Who is fleeced by the contractors? Who goes out lumbering and timber floating? Who works as a farmhand? Or as a day labourer? Who does the unskilled work in the towns and ports? It is always the rural poor, the horseless and one-horse peasants. It is always the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians. And what vast numbers of these there are in Russia! It has been calculated that in Russia (not including the Caucasus and Siberia) eight and sometimes even nine *million* passports are taken out yearly. These are all for migratory workers. They are peasants only in name; in reality they are hirelings, wage labourers. They must all unite with the town workers—and every ray of light and knowledge that reaches the countryside will strengthen and consolidate this unity.

There is one more point about "jobs" that must not be forgotten. Officials, and all sorts of people who think like officials, are fond of talking about the peasant, the poor muzhik, "needing" two things: land (but not too much of it—there cannot be very much of it, because the rich have grabbed it all) and a "job." And they say that, in order to help the people, efforts

should be made to start as many trades as possible in the country and to "provide" more "jobs." Such talk is sheer hypocrisy. "Jobs" for the poor means wage labour. "Providing jobs" for the peasants means transforming them into wage-labourers. Fine sort of assistance this! For the rich peasants there are very different sorts of "jobs," which demand capital, such as the building of a flour mill or some other plant, the purchase of threshing machines, commerce and so on. To confuse these jobs of the moneyed people with the *wage labour* of the poor is to deceive the poor. Of course, it is to the advantage of the rich to deceive the poor in this way, it is to their advantage to pretend that *every* peasant can take up any kind of "job" and has the capital for it. But he who really cares for the welfare of the poor will *tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth*.

It remains for us to consider the middle peasants. We have seen that, on the average, taking Russia as a whole, we must consider a middle peasant to be one who has a pair of horses, and that out of a total of ten million households there are roughly two million middle peasant households in the country. The middle peasant stands halfway between the rich peasant and the proletarian, and that is why he is called middle peasant. His standard of living, too, is middling: when the crop is good he makes ends meet, but poverty is always knocking at the door. He has either very little savings or none at all. So his farm is in a rather precarious position. He finds it hard to get money: only seldom can he make money out of his farm, and when he does, it is barely enough to make ends meet. To go out for a job would mean letting the farm take care of itself and everything would go to rack and ruin. In spite of this, many of the middle peasants are often forced to look for a job: they too have become hired labourers, necessity forces them to sell themselves to the landlord, to contract debts. And once in debt the middle peasant is hardly ever able to get out of it, for unlike the rich peasant he has no steady income. Once he gets into debt it is as if he had put his neck in a halter. He remains a debtor until he is utterly ruined. It is chiefly the middle peasant who falls into bondage to the landlord, because for piecework

the landlord must have a peasant who is not quite ruined, a peasant who has a pair of horses and all that is needed for farming. It is not so easy for the middle peasant to go away to look for a job—so he sells himself into bondage to the landlord in return for corn, in return for pasture and for the lease of “*otrezki*”¹ and for advances in cash in the winter. Besides the landlord and the money lender, the middle peasant is hard pressed by his rich neighbour, who always snatches the land from under his nose and never misses an opportunity to bully him in some way or other. And this is the life the middle peasant leads; he is neither fish nor fowl. He can become neither a real farmer nor a wage labourer. All the middle peasants try to keep up with the masters and want to become proprietors, but only very very few succeed in doing so. There are a few who try to make money out of the labour of others and to ride to wealth on another’s back by employing farmhands or day labourers. But the majority of the middle peasants have not the money to hire others—rather have they to hire themselves out.

Whenever a struggle begins between the rich and the poor, between the property owners and the workers, the middle peasant remains in between, not knowing which side to take. The rich invite him to join them: you are a farmer, they say to him, a man of property, you have nothing to do with the penniless worker. But the workers say: the rich will cheat you and swindle you, and there is no way out for you but to help us in our fight against all the rich. This fight for the middle peasant is going on everywhere, in all countries, wherever the Social-Democratic workers are fighting to emancipate the working people. In Russia the fight is just beginning. That is why we must carefully study the matter and understand clearly the deceits the rich resort to in order to win over the middle peasant, we must learn how to expose these deceits and help the middle peasant to find his real friends. If the Russian Social-

¹ Literally “cut off” land. When the serfs were emancipated in 1861 the best parts of their holdings were cut off and taken by the landlords. Later the landlords leased these lands to the peasants at exorbitant rents which were often paid in the form of labour. This is dealt with in detail in *Selected Works*, Vol. I.—Ed. Eng. ed.

Democratic workers find the right course immediately, it will be much easier for us than it has been for our comrades, the German workers, to establish a lasting alliance between the rural workers and the urban workers, and achieve a speedy victory over all the enemies of the toilers.

4. WHERE SHOULD THE MIDDLE PEASANT GO? SHOULD HE TAKE THE SIDE OF THE PROPERTY OWNERS AND OF THE RICH, OR THE SIDE OF THE WORKERS AND OF THE POOR?

The property owners, the bourgeoisie, try to draw the middle peasant to their side by promising him all sorts of measures for economic improvement (cheap ploughs, agricultural banks, the introduction of grass sowing, the cheap sale of livestock and fertilizers, and so on) and also by inducing the peasant to join all sorts of agricultural societies (co-operative societies, as they are called in books) which unite all farmers with the object of improving the methods of farming. In doing so the bourgeoisie tries to draw the middle and even the small peasant, even the semi-proletarian, away from an alliance with the workers, and tries to prevail on them to side with the rich, with the bourgeoisie, in the fight against the workers, against the proletariat.

To this the Social-Democratic workers reply: improved farming is an excellent thing. There is nothing wrong in buying ploughs more cheaply; nowadays even a merchant, if he is not a fool, tries to sell cheap to attract more customers. But when a poor or a middle peasant is told that improved farming and cheaper ploughs will help all of them to rid themselves of poverty and to stand on their feet, and that this can be done without touching the rich—it is *deceiving them*. All these improvements, lower prices and co-operatives (societies for the sale and purchase of goods) *will profit the rich to a much greater degree*. The rich grow more powerful and oppress the poor and middle peasants more and more. As long as the rich remain rich, as long as they own most of the land, of the livestock, of the equipment and of the money—as long as all this lasts, neither the poor, nor even the middle peasants will *ever*

be able to escape want. Here and there a middle peasant may be able to become rich with the help of all these improvements and co-operative societies, but the people and the middle peasants as a whole will sink deeper and deeper into poverty. In order that all the middle peasants may become rich, the rich must be turned out, and the only way to turn them out is to form an alliance between the urban workers and the rural poor.

The bourgeoisie say to the middle (and even to the small) peasant: we will sell you land at a low price, and ploughs at a low price, but in return you sell us your soul, give up fighting the rich.

The Social-Democratic worker says: if you are really offered goods at a low price, buy them by all means, if you have the money; that is sound business. But never sell your soul. To undertake not to fight the bourgeoisie in alliance with the urban workers would mean remaining a pauper and in want forever. If goods become cheaper, the rich will make more money and only become richer. But when you have no money, goods may become dirt cheap, but they will be of no use unless you take that money from the bourgeoisie.

Let us take an example. Those who support the bourgeoisie make much ado about all these co-operatives (societies for buying cheap and selling at a profit). There are even people, who call themselves "Socialist-Revolutionaries," who imitate the bourgeoisie and talk large about the peasant wanting nothing so much as co-operatives, and begin to organise all sorts of co-operative societies in Russia. But there are very few co-operative societies in Russia, and there will not be many until we have political liberty. But take Germany: there the peasants have many co-operative societies. But who profits most by these co-operative societies? One hundred and forty thousand farmers in the whole of Germany are members of societies for the sale of milk and dairy produce, and these 140,000 farmers (we use round figures for the sake of simplicity) have 1,100,000 cows. There are *four million* poor peasants in Germany. Only 40,000 of these are members of these societies: it follows that *only one* out of every hundred poor peasants has the benefit of these

co-operative societies. These 40,000 poor peasants own only 100,000 cows. The number of middle farmers, middle peasants in the country—is *one million*; of these 50,000 are members of co-operative societies (in other words, five out of every hundred) and they own 200,000 cows. Finally, the rich farmers (including both landlords and rich peasants) number *one-third of a million*; of these 50,000 are members of co-operative societies (that is to say, *seventeen* in every hundred!) and they own 300,000 cows!

You see who it is the co-operative societies help first and foremost. You see the way the peasant is hoodwinked by those people who make a lot of noise about saving the middle peasant by forming societies for buying cheap and selling at a profit. Really, the bourgeoisie wants to pay too low a price for “buying off” the peasant from the Social-Democrats who invite both the poor and the middle peasant to join them.

In our country, too, co-operative creameries and amalgamated dairies are beginning to be formed. In our country, too, there are plenty of people who shout: artels and the *mir* and co-operatives—these are what the peasant wants. But see who profits by these artels and co-operatives and by communal lease-holding. Out of every hundred households, at least twenty have no cows at all; thirty have only one cow each; these only sell milk from dire necessity—their own children have to go without milk, starve and die like flies. The rich peasants, however, have three or four cows and more each, and these rich peasants own half the total number of cows owned by the peasants. Who is it, then, that profits by co-operative creameries? Plainly, in the first place it is the landlords and the peasant bourgeoisie. Plainly, it is *to their advantage* to induce the middle peasants and the poor to strive to keep up with them and to make them believe that individual small farmers may extricate themselves from poverty by climbing out of their social position and joining the rich, and not by all the workers uniting to fight all the bourgeoisie.

The champions of the bourgeoisie, who pretend to be the champions and friends of the small peasant, approve of these

efforts and encourage them by every means. And many simple-minded people fail to see the wolf in sheep's clothing and believe that they are helping the poor and middle peasants when they repeat this bourgeois humbug. For instance, they write books and deliver lectures in which they try to make it appear that small farms are the most profitable, that they bring the highest incomes, that small farms prosper; that is why, they say, there are so many small farmers everywhere, and why they cling to the land so fiercely (and not because all the best lands are owned by the bourgeoisie, and all the money too, while the poor have to live all their lives penned up on little patches of land!). The small peasant does not require much money, say these smooth-tongued people; the small and the middle peasants are more thrifty and more industrious than the big farmers, and know how to live a simple life; instead of buying hay for their horses, they are content to feed them on straw. Instead of buying an expensive machine they get up earlier and toil longer and do as much as a machine does; instead of paying money to strangers for doing repairs, the peasant himself takes his hatchet on a Sunday and works a bit as a carpenter—and this is much cheaper than the way a big farmer would do the thing; instead of feeding an expensive horse or an ox, he uses his cow for ploughing; in Germany all the poor peasants plough with a cow, and in our country, too, the people have become so impoverished that they are beginning to plough not only with cows, but with men and women! How profitable, how cheap all this is! How praiseworthy of the middle and small peasants to be so industrious, so diligent, to live such simple lives, not to waste their time on nonsense, not to think of socialism, but only of their farms, to take the rich man as their model and not the workers who organise strikes against the bourgeoisie, to become respectable! If only all were so industrious and so diligent, and lived frugally, and did not drink, and saved more money, and spent less on calico, and had fewer children—all would be happy and there would be no poverty and no want!

These are the sweet songs the bourgeoisie sing for the benefit of the middle peasant, and there are simpletons who believe

these songs and repeat them.¹ In reality, all this honeyed talk is nothing but deceit and mockery of the peasant. What these smooth-tongued people call cheap and profitable farming is the want, the dire necessity, which forces the middle and small peasant to work from morning till night, to begrudge himself a bit of bread, to grudge every penny he spends. Very "cheap" and "profitable," no doubt, to wear the same pants for three years, to go about barefooted in the summer, to repair one's wooden plough with a bit of string and to feed one's cow on rotten straw from the roof! Put a bourgeois or a rich peasant on such a "cheap" and "profitable" farm, and he will soon forget all this honeyed talk!

Often the people who extol small farming want to help the peasant, but in reality they only do him harm. With their smooth talk they deceive the peasant in the same way as he is deceived by a *lottery*. I shall tell you the sort of thing a lottery is. Let us suppose I have a cow, worth 50 rubles. I want to turn the cow into money, so I offer everyone tickets at a ruble each. Everyone has a chance of getting the cow for one ruble! Folks are gullible, rubles pour in. When I have collected a hundred rubles I proceed to draw the lottery: the one whose ticket is drawn gets the cow for a ruble, the others get nothing. Was the cow "cheap" for the people? No, it cost them very dear, because the total money they paid was double the value of the cow, because two persons (the one who ran the lottery and the one who won the cow) made money without doing any work, and made it at the expense of the ninety-nine people who lost their money. It follows that those who say that lotteries are advantageous for the people are simply deceiving the people. All those who promise to deliver the peasants from poverty and misery by means of co-operatives (societies for buying cheap and

¹ In Russia these simpletons who wish the peasant well, but who every now and then start this sort of honeyed talk, are called "Narodniki" or the "champions of small farms." The "Socialist-Revolutionaries," for lack of understanding, follow in their footsteps. In Germany also there are many smooth-tongued people. One of them, Eduard David, has just written a big book, in which he says that small farms are infinitely more profitable than large ones, because the small peasant does not spend money needlessly, keeps no horses for ploughing, and is content to use his milch cow for ploughing.

selling at a profit), improved farming, banks and all that sort of thing, are deceiving them in exactly the same way. As at the lottery where there is one winner, and all the rest are losers, so it is with these things: one middle peasant may be clever enough to get rich, but ninety-nine of his fellow peasants bend their backs all their lives, never rid themselves of want, and even become more impoverished. Let every villager examine his community and the whole district a little more closely: how many middle peasants are there who become rich and forget want? And how many are there who can never rid themselves of it? How many are ruined and are compelled to leave their village? As you have seen, in the whole of Russia there are not more than two million middle peasant households. Suppose there were ten times as many societies of all kinds for buying cheap and selling at a profit as there are now. What would the result be? It would be a lot if 100,000 middle peasants succeeded in raising themselves to the level of the rich. What would that mean? It would mean that out of every hundred middle peasants, five would have become rich. But what about the other ninety-five? They would be in the same straits as ever, and many of them would be in even greater difficulties! And the poor would only be ruined all the more!

The very thing the bourgeoisie wants, of course, is for as many middle and poor peasants as possible to try to keep up with the rich, to *believe* it possible to abolish poverty without fighting the bourgeoisie, to place their *hopes* in diligence and frugality and in becoming rich, and not in uniting with the rural and urban workers. The bourgeoisie does all it can to foster this deceptive faith and hope in the peasant and tries to lull him with smooth talk.

To expose these smooth-tongued people as frauds, it is sufficient to ask them three questions.

The first question: can the working people rid themselves of want and misery as long as 100,000,000 dessiatins out of 240,000,000 dessiatins of productive land in Russia are owned by private landowners, or as long as 16,000 very large landowners own 65,000,000 dessiatins?

The second question: can the working people rid themselves of want and misery as long as one and a half million rich peasant families (out of a total of ten million) have appropriated half the acreage under peasant crops, half the number of horses and livestock owned by the peasants, and much more than half the peasant stocks and savings; as long as the peasant bourgeoisie continue to enrich themselves by oppressing the poor and middle peasants, and by making money out of the labour of others, of the farmhands and day labourers; as long as six and a half million peasant households are ruined, poor, always starving, and reduced to winning their miserable crust of bread by all kinds of wage labour?

The third question: can the working people rid themselves of want and misery, now that money has become the principal power, now that everything can be bought for money—factories and land, and even men and women can be bought to serve as wage-labourers, as wage-slaves? Now that no one can live or run a farm without money? When a small farmer, a poor peasant, has to wage a struggle against the big farmer over money? When a few thousand landlords, merchants, manufacturers and bankers have appropriated hundreds of millions of rubles, and in addition control all the banks, where thousands of millions of rubles are deposited?

No smooth talk about the advantages of small farms or of co-operatives will allow you to evade these questions. To these questions there can be only one answer: the real "co-operation" that can save the working people is the *union* of the rural poor with the Social-Democratic workers in the towns to fight the whole of the bourgeoisie. The faster *this* union grows and becomes strong, the sooner will the middle peasant realise that the promises of the bourgeoisie are all lies, and the sooner will the middle peasant join our side.

The bourgeoisie know this, and that is why, besides smooth talk, they spread all sorts of falsehoods about the Social-Democrats. They say that the Social-Democrats want to deprive the middle and poor peasants of their property. *This is a lie.* The Social-Democrats want to deprive only the big proprietors, *only*

those who live by the labour of others, of their property. The Social-Democrats will never take away the property of the small and middle farmers who do not employ labourers. The Social-Democrats defend and champion the interests of all the toilers, not only the interests of the urban workers, who are more class conscious and more united than the others, but of the agricultural workers as well, and of the small artisans and of the peasants, in so far as these do not employ labour, do not try to imitate the rich and do not take the side of the bourgeoisie. The Social-Democrats fight for all improvements in the conditions of the workers and peasants which can be introduced immediately, even before we have destroyed the bourgeoisie, and which will help them in the fight against the bourgeoisie. But the Social-Democrats do not want to mislead the peasant, they tell him the whole truth, they warn him straightforwardly that as long as the bourgeoisie is in power no improvements will rid the people of want and misery. In order that all the people may know what the Social-Democrats are and what they stand for, the Social-Democrats have drawn up a programme. A programme means a brief, plain and precise statement of all the things the Party is trying to obtain and is fighting for. The Social-Democratic Party is the only party that advances a plain and precise programme in order that all the people may know and see it, and that the Party may consist only of people who really intend to fight for the emancipation of all the toilers from the yoke of the bourgeoisie, and who understand who must unite for this fight and how the fight must be conducted. Besides, the Social-Democrats believe that they must explain in their programme, in a straightforward, open and precise way, the causes of the poverty and distress of the toilers and why the unity of the workers is becoming wider and stronger. It is not enough to say that life is hard, and to call for revolt; every shouter can do that, but that is of no use. The toilers must understand why they are living in such misery and with whom they must unite in order to fight to abolish poverty.

We have stated what the Social-Democrats want, we have explained the causes of the poverty and distress of the toilers;

we have indicated whom the rural poor must fight and with whom they must unite for this fight.

We shall now explain *what improvements* in the conditions of the workers and the peasants can be won *immediately* if we fight for them.

5. WHAT IMPROVEMENTS DO THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS TRY TO OBTAIN FOR THE WHOLE PEOPLE AND FOR THE WORKERS?

The Social-Democrats fight for the liberation of all the toilers from robbery, oppression and injustice. To become free the working class must first of all become united. And to become united it must have freedom to unite, it must have the right to unite, it must have *political liberty*. We have said that autocratic government means making the people the serfs of the officials and of the police. Political liberty is therefore needed by the whole of the people, except a handful of courtiers and a few moneybags and high dignitaries who are received at court. But it is the workers and the peasants who most of all need political liberty. The rich can purchase freedom for themselves from the tyranny and caprices of the officials and of the police. The rich can make their complaints heard in the highest places. And this being so, the police and the officials take less liberties with the rich than with the poor. The workers and the peasants have no money with which to bribe the police or the officials, they have no one to complain to, they are not in a position to sue them in court. The workers and the peasants will never rid themselves of the extortions, the whims or the insults of the police and the officials as long as there is no *representative government, as long as there is no national assembly of deputies*. It is only such a national assembly of deputies that can free the people from serfdom to the officials. Every intelligent peasant must stand for the Social-Democrats, who first and foremost demand of the tsarist government that *a national assembly of deputies be convened*. The deputies must be elected by all, irrespective of "estate," irrespective of wealth and poverty. The elections must be free, without any interference on the part of the officials; they must be carried out under the supervision of

the people's delegates and not of police officers or of Zemsky Nachalniks. Under such conditions, the representatives of the people will be able to discuss all the needs of the people, and introduce a better state of affairs in Russia.

The Social-Democrats demand that the police be deprived of the power to imprison anyone without trial. The officials must be severely punished for arbitrarily arresting anyone. To prevent them from violating the law, the officials must be chosen by the people, and everyone must have the right to sue any official before a court without first having to ask for permission. What is the use of complaining about the police to the Zemsky Nachalnik, or about the Zemsky Nachalnik to the governor? Of course, the Zemsky Nachalnik will always protect the police with his authority, and the governor will always protect the Zemsky Nachalnik, and the plaintiff runs a fair chance of being punished himself, of being put into prison or deported to Siberia. Only when everyone in Russia (as has long been the case in other countries) has the right to complain to the national assembly, to the elected courts, and to speak freely of his needs, to write about them in the newspapers—only then will the officials feel that they have someone to be afraid of.

The Russian people are still the serfs of the officials. Without the permission of the officials the people cannot call meetings, they cannot print books or newspapers! Is this not serfdom? If meetings cannot be freely called, or books freely printed, how can one obtain redress against the officials or against the rich? Of course, the officials suppress every book and every utterance that tells the truth about the people's poverty. The present book, too, has to be printed by the Social-Democratic Party secretly and circulated secretly: anyone who is found in possession of this book will see no end of courts and prisons. But the Social-Democratic workers are not afraid of this: they print more and more, and give the people more and more truthful books to read. And no prisons, no persecution can stop the fight for the people's liberty!

The Social-Democrats demand that all distinction between estates be abolished, and that all the citizens of the state have

exactly the same rights. Today we have tax-paying and non-tax-paying "estates," privileged and non-privileged "estates," blue blood and common blood; even the birch has been retained for the common people. In no country are the workers and peasants in such a position of inferiority. In no country, except Russia, are there different laws for different "estates." It is time the Russian people, too, demanded that every peasant possess *all the rights* that are possessed by the nobility. Is it not a disgrace that the birch should still be used and a *poll tax-paying* estate be in existence more than forty years after the abolition of serfdom?

The Social-Democrats demand that the people have complete freedom to move from place to place and to choose their occupations. What does this mean, this *freedom to move from place to place*? It means that the peasant must be free to go where he pleases, to move wherever he wants to, to choose for himself the village or the town he prefers, without having to ask for permission. It means that passports must be abolished in Russia too (in foreign countries passports were abolished long ago), that no police officer, no Zemsky Nachalnik must be allowed to stop any peasant from settling down or working wherever he pleases. The Russian peasant is still the serf of the officials to such an extent that he is not free to move to a town, or free to settle in a new district. The Minister issues orders that the governors should not allow *unauthorised* settlement! The governor knows better than the peasant what place is good for the peasant! The peasant is a child who dares not move without authority! Is this not serfdom, I ask you? Is it not an insult to the people when every tinpot profligate nobleman is allowed to order grown-up farmers about?

There is a book called *The Failure of the Crops and the Distress of the People* (the famine), written by the present "Minister of Agriculture," Mr. Yermolov. This book says in so many words: the peasant must not migrate, as long as their worships the landlords want hands. The Minister speaks quite openly, does not hesitate a bit, he thinks the peasant will not hear what he is saying, will not understand. Why allow the people to go away when the landlords need cheap labour? The more the

people are crowded on the land, the better for the landlords; the poorer the peasants are the more cheaply can they be hired and the more meekly will they submit to bullying of every kind. In olden times it was the bailiffs who looked after the landlord's interests, now it is the Zemsky Nachalniks and the governors. In olden times it was the bailiffs who ordered the flogging of peasants in the stables, now it is the Zemsky Nachalniks who order the flogging in the volost office.

The Social-Democrats demand that the standing army be abolished, and that a militia be established in its stead, that all the people be armed. A standing army is an army that is divorced from the people and trained to shoot down the people. If the soldier were not locked up for years in barracks and inhumanly drilled there, would he ever agree to shoot at his brothers, the workers and the peasants? Would he go against the starving peasants? A standing army is not in the least necessary to protect the country from an attack of the enemy; a people's militia is sufficient. If every citizen is armed, Russia need fear no enemy. And the people would be delivered from the burden of militarism: militarism costs *hundreds of millions of rubles a year*, and all this money is collected from the people; that is why the taxes are so heavy and why it becomes increasingly difficult to live. Militarism further increases the power of the officials and of the police over the people. Militarism is required to plunder foreign peoples, as for instance, to take the land from the Chinese. The people gain nothing by this, and their burden only increases because of the increased taxes. The substitution of the armed nation for a standing army would enormously lighten the burden of all the workers and all the peasants.

Similarly, *the abolition of indirect taxation*, which the Social-Democrats demand, would be an enormous relief. Indirect taxes are those taxes which are not assessed on a definite piece of land or farm, but are paid by the people *indirectly*, by paying a higher price for what they buy. The Treasury places a tax on sugar, on spirits, on kerosene, on matches, and all sorts of articles of consumption; the tax is paid to the Treasury by the merchant or by the manufacturer, but, of course, he does not

pay it out of his own pocket, but out of the money his customers pay him. The price of spirits, of sugar, of kerosene, of matches, is increased, so that every purchaser of a bottle of spirits or of a pound of sugar has to pay the tax in addition to the price of the goods. Out of the fourteen kopeks you pay for a pound of sugar, let us say, about four kopeks constitutes the tax: the sugar manufacturer has already paid the tax to the Treasury and is now exacting the sum he has paid from every one of his customers. You see that indirect taxes are taxes on articles of consumption, taxes which are paid by the consumer paying a higher price for the article he buys. It is sometimes said that indirect taxes are the fairest taxes: you pay in the measure in which you buy. But this is not so. Indirect taxes are the most unfair of all taxes, because they are harder for the poor to pay than for the rich. The rich man's income is ten times or maybe a hundred times as large as the peasant's or the worker's. But does the rich man require a hundred times as much sugar? Or ten times as much spirits or matches or kerosene? Of course not! At the very most, a rich family will buy three times as much kerosene or spirits or sugar as a poor family. And this means that the rich man will pay a *smaller part* of his income than the poor man. Let us suppose that the poor peasant's income is two hundred rubles a year; let us suppose he buys sixty rubles' worth of such goods as are taxed and which are consequently dearer (the duty imposed on sugar, matches, kerosene, is an *excise* duty, *i.e.*, the manufacturer pays the duty before placing the goods on the market; in the case of spirits, which are manufactured by the state, the Treasury simply fixes a higher price; cotton goods, iron and other goods have risen in price because cheap foreign goods are not admitted into Russia unless a heavy duty is paid on them). Of these sixty rubles *twenty rubles* constitutes the tax. This means that out of every ruble of his income the poor peasant has to pay *ten kopeks* in indirect taxes (not counting direct taxes, land compensation payments, quit rent, land tax, Zemstvo, volost and village rates). The rich peasant has an income of one thousand rubles; he will buy one hundred and fifty rubles' worth of taxed goods and pay *fifty rubles* in taxes

(included in these one hundred and fifty rubles). This means that out of every ruble of his income the rich peasant pays only *five kopeks* in indirect taxes. The richer the man the smaller the share of his income does he pay in indirect taxes. This makes indirect taxation *the most unfair* form of taxation. Indirect taxes are taxes on the poor. The peasants and the workers together form nine-tenths of the population and pay eight or nine-tenths of the indirect taxes. And, in all probability, the income of the peasants and workers constitutes not more than four-tenths of the whole national income! So the Social-Democrats demand the abolition of indirect taxation and the introduction of a *graduated* tax on incomes and inheritances. "Graduated" means that the higher the income, the higher the tax. Those who have an income of a thousand rubles must pay one kopek to the ruble; if the income is two thousand, two kopeks to the ruble must be paid, and so on. The smallest incomes (let us say incomes of under four hundred rubles) do not pay anything at all. The richest pay the highest taxes. Such a tax, an *income* tax, or more exactly a *graduated income tax*, would be much fairer than indirect taxation. And that is why the Social-Democrats strive to secure the abolition of indirect taxation and to introduce a graduated income tax. Naturally, all the property owners, all the bourgeoisie object to this measure and resist it. Only by a firm alliance between the rural poor and the urban workers can this improvement be *won* from the bourgeoisie.

Finally, a very important improvement for the whole of the people, and for the rural poor in particular, would be the *free education of children*, which the Social-Democrats demand. To-day there are far fewer schools in the country than in the towns, and besides, it is only the rich classes, only the bourgeoisie, who are in a position to give their children a good education. Only the free and compulsory education of *all children* can free the people at least to some extent from their present state of ignorance. And it is the rural poor who suffer most from this ignorance, who stand in particular need of education. Of course, the education we want is genuine, free education, and not the sort supplied by the officials and the priests.

The Social-Democrats further demand that everyone have the unrestricted right to belong to whatever denomination he pleases. Of the European countries Russia and Turkey are the only ones which have retained these shameful laws against persons belonging to any other religion than the Orthodox religion, the laws against schismatics, dissenters and Jews. These laws either directly forbid the practice of a certain religion or forbid preaching it, or deprive those who belong to it of certain rights. All these laws are as unjust, as arbitrary and as shameful as can be. Everyone must be perfectly free not only to belong to whatever religion he pleases, *he must be free to preach his religion and to change his religion.* No official should be entitled even to ask anyone about his religion: it is a matter for that person's conscience and no one has any business to interfere. There must be no "*dominating*" religion or church. All religions, all churches must be equal before the law. The priests of the various religions must be paid salaries by those who belong to their religions, but the state must not use state money to support any religion whatever, must not grant money to maintain any priests, Orthodox, schismatic, dissenters, or any others. This is what the Social-Democrats fight for, and until these measures are carried out without any reservation and without any subterfuge, the people will not be freed from the shameful police persecution of religion, or from the no less shameful police doles to one of these religions.

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We have seen what improvements the Social-Democrats demand for all the people and especially for the poor. Now let us see what improvements they demand for the workers, not only for the urban and factory workers, but also for the agricultural labourers. The factory workers live in much more congested conditions; they work in large workshops, it is easier for them to avail themselves of the assistance of educated Social-Democrats. That is why the urban workers were the first to start the struggle against the employers, and to obtain certain improvements, even to obtain the passing of factory laws. But the Social-

Democrats fight to have these improvements extended to *all* the workers: to the handicraftsmen who work for an employer at home, both in town and country, to the wage workers employed by small masters and artisans, to the workers in the building trades (carpenters, bricklayers, etc.)—and to the lumberjacks and the unskilled labourers—and to the *agricultural labourers as much as to the rest*. All over Russia, all these workers are now beginning to unite, following the example and with the aid of the factory workers, to unite for the struggle for better conditions of life, for a shorter working day, *for higher wages*. And the Social-Democratic Party has set itself the task of supporting *all* workers in their struggle for a better life, of helping them to organise (to unite) the most resolute and the most reliable workers into strong unions, of helping them by circulating books and leaflets, by sending experienced workers to those fresh to the movement and helping them in every possible way. When we have obtained political liberty, we shall also have our men in the national assembly of deputies, there will be worker-representatives, Social-Democrats, and like their comrades in other countries, they will demand laws for the protection of the workers.

We shall not enumerate *all* the improvements the Social-Democratic Party strives to obtain for the workers: they have all been set forth in our programme and explained in detail in a book called *The Workers' Cause in Russia*.¹ Here it will be sufficient to mention the most important of these improvements. The working day must not be longer than eight hours. One day a week must always be a rest day. Overtime must be absolutely forbidden, and so must night work. Children up to the age of sixteen must be given free education, and must consequently not be allowed to work for wages until that age. Women must not work in trades dangerous to their health. The employer must compensate the workers for all disablement caused during work, for example, for injury caused by work on threshing machines, winnowing machines, etc. All wage workers must be paid *weekly*,

¹ A pamphlet by L. Martov, setting out, in a popular form, the principles of the Social-Democratic programme.—Ed.

and not once in two months or once a quarter as is often the case with agricultural labourers. It is very important for the workers to be paid regularly every week and to be paid in cash, and not in goods. Employers are in the habit of making the workers accept all sorts of worthless goods at exorbitant prices in payment of wages; to put an end to this disgraceful practice the payment of wages in kind must be absolutely prohibited. Further, aged workers must be given pensions by the state. The workers by their labour maintain all the rich classes, and the whole state, and this gives them as good a right to receive a pension as the government officials. In order that the employers may not take advantage of their position to disregard the rules introduced to protect the workers, inspectors must be appointed to supervise not only the factories, but also the large farms of the landlords and, in general, all enterprises where wage labour is employed. But these inspectors must not be officials, they must not be appointed by Ministers or governors, they must not be in the service of the police. The inspectors must be *elected by the workers*, the state must pay salaries to persons who enjoy the confidence of the workers and whom they have freely elected. These elected representatives of the workers must see to it that the workers' lodgings are in proper condition, that the employers do not dare compel the workers to live in what is like a dog's kennel or a dug-out (as is often the case with agricultural labourers), that the rules concerning the workers' rest are observed, and so on. Again, it must be borne in mind that no elected workers' representatives will be of any use to the workers as long as there is no political liberty, as long as the police are all-powerful, and are not responsible to the people. Everyone knows that the police now arrest not only workers' delegates, but every worker who dares speak in the name of all his fellow workers, who dares expose breaches of the law or call on the workers to unite. But when we have political liberty, the workers' delegates will be of great use.

All employers (manufacturers, landlords, contractors, rich peasants) must be *absolutely forbidden* to make any deductions from the wages of their workers on their own accord, for ex-

ample, deductions for bad work, deductions in the form of fines, etc. It is illegal and tyrannical for employers to make deductions from the wages of the workers *on their own accord*. The employer must not reduce a worker's wage on the pretext of fines and deductions, or in any way whatsoever. The employer cannot act as judge and executive (a fine sort of judge who pockets for himself deductions from the worker's wages!), he must go to a *proper court*, and this court must consist of delegates elected by the workers and the employers in equal numbers. Only such a court will be able to judge fairly all the grievances of the employers against the workers and of the workers against the employers.

These are the improvements the Social-Democrats strive to obtain for the whole of the working class. The workers on every estate, on every farm, in the service of every contractor, must meet and discuss with persons worthy of their confidence what improvements they must strive to obtain and what demands they should advance (for the demands of the workers will, of course, be different in different factories, in different farms and with different contractors).

Social-Democratic committees all over Russia are helping the workers to formulate their demands in a clear and precise way, and are helping them to issue printed leaflets where all these demands are set out, so that they may be known to all the workers, and to the employers and the authorities. When the workers unite as one man in support of their demands, the employers always have to give way and agree to them. In the towns the workers have obtained many improvements in this way, and now the village craftsmen and the artisans and the agricultural labourers are also beginning to unite (to organise) and to fight for their demands. As long as we have no political liberty we carry on the fight in secret, hiding from the police who prohibit the publication of leaflets and the combination of the workers. But when we have won political liberty, we shall carry on the fight on a larger scale and carry it on quite openly, so that the toilers all over Russia may unite as one man and defend themselves from oppression. The greater the number of workers who

are united in the *workers' Social-Democratic Party*, the stronger will they be, the sooner will they be able to free the working class from all oppression, from all wage labour, from being compelled to work for the bourgeoisie.

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We have said that the Social-Democratic Party strives to obtain improvements not only for the workers, but for *all the peasants* as well. Now let us see what improvements it strives to obtain for the peasants.

6. WHAT IMPROVEMENTS DO THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS STRIVE TO OBTAIN FOR ALL THE PEASANTS?

In order to secure the complete emancipation of all the toilers, the rural poor, united with the urban workers, must fight against the whole of the bourgeoisie including the rich peasants. The rich peasants will try to pay their farmhands as little as possible and make them work as long and as hard as possible, while the workers in town and country will try to secure better wages, better conditions and regular periods of rest for the farmhands working for the rich peasants. This means that the rural poor must form unions of their own, which shall not include the rich peasants. We have already mentioned this point, and we shall always repeat it.

But in Russia, all the peasants, rich and poor, are still serfs in many respects; they constitute an *inferior*, "*black*" *tax-paying* estate; they are the serfs of the police officers and of the *Zemsky Nachalniki*; very often they have to work for the landlord in payment for the use of *otrezki*, for watering places, for pasture, or for a meadow, just as they used to do for the feudal lord under serfdom. *All* the peasants want to be free from this new serfdom, *all* of them want to have equal rights, *all* of them hate the landlords who still force them *to do serf labour work, to do "otraboiki"*¹ in payment for the use of the gentry's land and pastures and meadows, to work also "for trespassing," and to send their womenfolk to reap the landlord's field "for the honour of it."*

¹ The payment of rent by work.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

This work for the landlord is a greater burden for the poor peasants than for the rich peasants. The rich peasant is often able to pay the landlord money in lieu of this work, but even the rich peasant is badly squeezed by the landlord. Hence, the rural poor must fight against their lack of rights, against every kind of *barshchina*, against every kind of *otrabotki*, side by side with the rich peasants. We shall be able to abolish *all* bondage, *all* poverty only when we overcome the bourgeoisie *as a whole* (including the rich peasants). But there are forms of bondage which we can abolish *before that time*, because even the rich peasant suffers badly from them. There are still many localities and many districts in Russia where very often the peasants are quite like serfs. This is why the Russian workers and all the rural poor must carry on a *fight with both hands and on two sides*: with one hand—a *fight against all the bourgeois*, in alliance with all the workers, and with the other hand—a *fight against the officials in the villages, against the feudal landlords*, in alliance with all the peasants. Unless the rural poor form a union of their own, which shall not include the rich peasants, they will be taken in and deceived by the rich peasants, who will become landlords themselves, while the poor will not only remain poor, but will not even be granted the right to combine. Unless the rural poor fight side by side with the rich peasants against feudal bondage, they will remain fettered and attached to one spot, nor will they gain freedom to combine with the urban workers.

The rural poor must begin by striking a blow at the landlords and throwing off at least the most vicious and harmful forms of feudal bondage; in this fight many of the rich peasants and adherents of the bourgeoisie will take the side of the poor, because everyone is fed up with the arrogance of the nobles. But as soon as we have curtailed the power of the landlords, the rich peasant's nature will at once reveal itself and he will stretch out his paws to grab everything; his paws are good for grabbing, and have already grabbed a great deal. Hence we must be on our guard, and form a strong inseverable alliance with the urban workers. The urban workers will help to knock the old habits out of the landlords and to tame the rich peasants

a bit (as they have already succeeded in taming their bosses, the manufacturers, somewhat). Without an alliance with the urban workers the rural poor will never rid themselves of bondage, of poverty and distress; except for the urban workers, there is *no one* to help the village poor, and they can count on no one but themselves. But there are improvements which we can obtain first, which we can obtain at the very outset of the great struggle. There is much bondage in Russia of a kind that has long ceased to exist in other countries, and it is this bondage to the officials, to the landlords, this feudal bondage, that *the Russian peasantry as a whole* can rid itself of *immediately*.

Let us now see what improvements the R.S.D.L.P. strives to obtain first of all, so as to free the Russian peasantry as a whole from at least the most vicious feudal bondage, so as to untie the hands of the rural poor for their struggle against the Russian bourgeoisie as a whole.

The first demand of the R.S.D.L.P. is that all land compensation payments, all quit rent, all dues the peasantry has to pay as a "tax-paying" estate, must be abolished immediately. When committees of the nobles and the Russian tsar's government which protected the nobles "emancipated" the peasants from serfdom, the peasants were compelled to buy out their own land, to pay for the land which they had tilled for generations! This was *robbery*. The committees of the nobles, with the aid of the tsarist government, simply *robbed* the peasants. In many places the tsarist government sent troops to impose the statutory charters¹ *by force of arms*, and to subdue, by military execution, the peasants who refused to accept the curtailed "pauper" holdings. Without the help of the military, without tortures and shootings, the committees of the nobles would never have been able to rob the peasants in the brazen way they did at the time of the emancipation of the serfs. The peasants must always remember the way they were robbed and defrauded by these committees of the nobles and landlords, because now, as then, the tsarist government, whenever it appoints a committee

¹ Regulations governing the emancipation of the serfs. See note to page 235.***—Ed. Eng. ed.

to make new laws concerning the peasants, never appoints any one but landlords and officials to sit on it. The tsar recently issued a manifesto (March 11 [February 26], 1903)* in which he promises to revise and improve the laws concerning the peasants. Who will do this revising and improving? Why, again the nobility, again the officials! The peasants will continue to be defrauded until they succeed in getting *peasant committees* formed to improve their conditions. It is time the landlords, the Zemsky Nachalniki and all the officials stopped ordering the peasants about! It is time to put an end to this serfdom of the peasant to every police officer, to every young profligate nobleman who now bears the title of *Zemsky Nachalnik*, to every police captain or governor! The peasants must demand that they be allowed to settle their affairs *themselves*, that they *themselves* be allowed to draw up, to pass and to carry out new laws. The peasants must demand the formation of freely elected *peasant committees*, and until they obtain this they will always be defrauded and robbed by the nobility and the officials. No one will free the peasants from the official bloodsuckers until they free themselves, until they unite and take their fate into their own hands.

The Social-Democrats not only demand the complete and immediate abolition of land compensation payments, of quit rent and of imposts of every kind, they also demand that the sums already taken from the people as compensation for the land *be refunded to the people*. The peasants all over Russia have paid hundreds of millions of rubles since they were emancipated from serfdom by the committees of the nobles. The peasants must demand that this money be returned to them. Let the government impose a special tax on the big landowning nobility, let the land be taken from the monasteries and from the Department of Appanages (*i.e.*, from the tsar's family), let the national assembly of deputies use this money for the benefit of the peasants. Nowhere in the world is the peasant so down-trodden or so impoverished as in Russia. Nowhere do millions of peasants die of starvation as they do in Russia. The peasants in Russia have been reduced to starvation because they were

robbed long ago by the committees of the nobles, and are being robbed to this day by being forced to pay tribute to the heirs of the feudal landlords every year in the form of compensation payments and quit rent. The robbers must be made to answer for their crimes! Let money be taken from the big landed nobility in order to provide serious relief for the famine-stricken. What the starving peasant wants is not charity, not doles: he must demand that the money he has paid for years and years to the landlords and to the state be returned to him. Then the national assembly of deputies and the peasant committees will be able to give real help to the starving.

Further, The Social-Democratic Labour Party demands the immediate abolition of mutual responsibility² and of *all laws which restrict the peasant in the free disposal of his land*. The tsar's Manifesto of March 11 (February 20), 1903, promises the abolition of mutual responsibility. A law to this effect has already been passed. But this is not enough. *All the laws* that prevent the peasant from freely disposing of his land must be abolished immediately: otherwise, even without mutual responsibility, the peasant will not be free and will remain a semi-serf. The peasant must be made *entirely free* to dispose of his land: to lease or sell it to whomever he pleases without having to ask for permission. This is something the tsar's *ukase* does not authorise: the gentry, the merchants and the townspeople are free to dispose of their land, but the peasant is not. The muzhik is treated like an infant, he must have a Zemsky Nachalnik to look after him, like a nurse. The muzhik must not be allowed to sell his allotment or else he will squander the money! This is the serf owner's way of arguing, and there are simpletons who believe him and, wishing the peasant well, they say that he must not be allowed to sell his land. Even the Narodniki (of whom we have already spoken) and the people who call themselves "Socialist-Revolutionaries" yield to this argument and agree that it is better that the peasant should remain just a bit of a serf rather than that he be allowed to sell his land.

² All the peasants in a village community were collectively held responsible for the payment of taxes, etc.—Ed. Eng. ed.

The Social-Democrats say: this is nothing but hypocrisy, nothing but noblemen's ideas, nothing but smooth talk! When we have attained socialism, when the working class has conquered the bourgeoisie, the land will be owned in common and *no one* will have the right to sell land. But what is to be the position in the meantime? Are the nobleman and the merchant to be allowed to sell their land, and is the peasant not to be allowed to do so?! Are the nobleman and the merchant to be free while the peasant remains a semi-serf? Is the peasant to continue to have to beg permission from the authorities?

All this is just deceit, concealed under a lot of smooth words—but deceit for all that.

As long as the nobleman and the merchant are allowed to sell land, the peasant must also have the *unrestricted right* to sell his land and to dispose of it with *complete freedom*, in exactly the same way as the nobleman or the merchant.

When the working class is victorious over the whole of the bourgeoisie, it will take the land away from the big proprietors and introduce *co-operative farming* on the big estates, so that the workers will farm the land together, in common, and freely elect trusted men to manage the farms. They will use machinery to save labour; they will work in shifts for not more than eight (or even six) hours daily. Then the small peasant who prefers to carry on his farm in the old way on individual lines will not produce for the market, to sell to anyone who comes along, but will produce for the workers' associations; the small peasant will supply the workers' associations with corn, meat, vegetables, and the workers in return will provide him with machinery, livestock, fertilizers, clothes and whatever else he may require, without his having to pay for it. Then there will be no struggle for money between the big and the small farmer, then there will be no wage labour for others; all workers will work for themselves, all labour-saving devices and all machinery will benefit the workers and help to make their work easier, to improve their standard of living.

But every sensible man will realise that socialism cannot be attained at one stroke; to attain it we must wage a fierce struggle

against the whole of the bourgeoisie and all the governments, we must unite to form a solid, inseverable alliance of all the urban workers in Russia with all the rural poor. This is a great cause, it is worth devoting one's life to. But until we have attained socialism, the big owner will always fight against the small owner for money. Is the big landowner to be free to sell his land, and is the small peasant not to be free to do so? We repeat: the peasants are not infants and they will not allow anyone to order them about; the peasants must receive *all the rights* that are enjoyed by the nobility and the merchants, all these rights without restriction.

We are told that the peasant's land is not his own, it is communal land, that everyone cannot be allowed to sell communal land. This too is a lie. Have not the nobles and the merchants their communities? Do not the nobles and the merchants combine to form companies to buy land and factories, or any other thing in common? Why then are no restrictions invented for the associations of the nobility? And why do the police scum zealously invent restrictions and prohibitions when it comes to the muzhik? The peasants have never seen any good from the officials, they have seen only beatings, extortions and bullying. The peasants will never see anything good until they take their affairs into their own hands, until they obtain equal rights and complete freedom. If the peasants want their land to be communal, no one will dare interfere with them, and they will voluntarily form a community which will include whomever they like and on whatever terms they like, they will freely draw up a communal contract in whatever form they like. And let no official dare poke his nose into the communal affairs of the peasants. Let no one exercise his wits on the peasants to invent prohibitions and disabilities for them.

* * *

There is one more important improvement the Social-Democrats strive to obtain for the peasants. They want to restrict the peasants' bondage to the nobility, their feudal bondage, immediately. As long as poverty exists bondage cannot be completely abolished, and poverty cannot be abolished as long as

the land and the factories are in the hands of the bourgeoisie, as long as money is the principal power in the world, and until a *socialist society* has been established. But in Russia, in the rural districts, much bondage of a particularly vicious sort still survives which no longer exists in foreign countries, although socialism has not yet been introduced there. There is still much *feudal bondage* in Russia which is profitable to all the landlords, which weighs heavily on all the peasants, and which can and must be abolished immediately and first of all.

Let us explain the sort of bondage we call feudal bondage.

Everyone who lives in the countryside knows cases like the following. The landlord's land adjoins the peasant's land. At the time of the emancipation, plots of land that were indispensable for the peasants were cut off from the peasants' land; pasture, woods, watering places were cut off in this way. The peasants could not do without these *otrezki*, without the pasture, or without the watering place. Whether they liked it or not the peasants were forced to go to the landlord to ask him to permit their cattle to go to the water, or to lease the pasture or something of that kind. The landlord does not farm any land, and may even have no money at all, he lives only by keeping the peasants in bondage. In return for the use of the *otrezki* the peasants work for him for nothing; they plough his land with their horses, they gather in his corn and his hay, they thresh his grain for him, sometimes they even have to cart their manure to the landlord's fields, or bring him homespun cloth, and eggs and poultry. Just as under serfdom! Under serfdom the peasants had to work for nothing for the landlord in whose manor they lived, and today they very often have to work for nothing for the landlord in return for the very same land which the committees of the nobles filched from them at the time of the emancipation. It does not differ from *barshchina*.¹ And in some provinces the peasants actually call it *barshchina* or *panshchina*. Well, this is what we call feudal bondage. At the time of the emancipation from serfdom the landlords, the committees of the nobles, contrived matters in such a way as to keep the peasants

¹ Russian for serf labour.—Ed. Eng. ed,

in bondage in the old way. They would deliberately curtail the peasants' allotments, and deliberately drive a wedge of landlord's land in between the peasant's holdings so as to make it impossible for him even to let his hen out without trespassing; they would deliberately transfer the peasants to land of worse quality, block the way to the watering place by a strip of landlord's land—in a word, they contrived matters in such a way that the peasants found themselves in a trap, and could easily be taken captive. There are still countless numbers of villages where the peasants are in the power of the local landlord, quite as much as they were under serfdom. In villages like these the rich peasant and the poor peasant are both bound hand and foot and delivered defenceless to the landlord. The poor peasant suffers from this state of affairs even worse than the rich peasant. The rich peasant sometimes owns some land and sends his labourers to work for the landlord instead of going himself, but the poor peasant has no way out and the landlord has him at his mercy. Under this bondage the peasant often has not a moment's breathing space; he cannot even go away from his landlord to look for work elsewhere; he has no time to think of uniting in an association, in one party with all the rural poor and the urban workers.

Now let us see whether it is possible to abolish this sort of bondage at once, without delay, immediately. The Social-Democratic Labour Party proposes *two* measures to this end. But we must repeat that only socialism can deliver the poor from all bondage, for as long as the rich have power they will always oppress the poor in one way or another. It is not possible to abolish all bondage at one stroke, but it is possible greatly to restrict the most vicious, the most disgusting form of bondage, feudal bondage, which weighs heavily on the poor, on the middle and even on the rich peasants; it is possible to obtain immediate relief for the peasants.

There are two means to this end.

The first means: freely elected courts consisting of delegates of the farmhands and of the poorest peasants, as well as of the rich peasants and of the landlords,

The second means: freely elected *peasant committees*. These peasant committees must be empowered not only to discuss and adopt measures for the abolition of *barshchina*, for the abolition of the survivals of serfdom, but they must also be empowered to *confiscate the "otrezki" and return them to the peasants*.

Let us consider these two measures a little more closely. Freely elected courts consisting of trusted people will consider all cases arising out of complaints of peasants against bondage. These courts will be empowered to reduce rents if the landlord, taking advantage of the peasants' poverty, has fixed them too high. These courts will be empowered to free the peasants from excessive payments, as in cases when a landlord engages a peasant in the winter for summer work at an excessively low wage; the court will judge the case and fix a fair wage. Of course, the court must not consist of officials, but of freely elected, trusted people, and the agricultural labourers and the rural poor must also elect their representatives whose number must not in any case be less than those elected by the rich peasants and the landlords. These courts must also try cases between labourers and employers. When courts like these have been established it will be easier for the labourers and all the rural poor to defend their rights, to unite and to ascertain what people can be trusted to stand up for the poor and for the workers.

The other measure is still more important. This is the establishment of free *peasant committees* consisting of elected representatives of the farmhands and of the poor, middle and rich peasants in every uyezd (or, if the peasants think fit, they may elect several committees in each uyezd; perhaps they will even prefer to establish a committee in every volost and in every large village). No one knows better than the peasants the bondage that weighs on them. No one will be able to expose the landlords who to this day live on feudal bondage better than the peasants themselves. The peasant committees will decide what *otrezki*, what meadows or pastures or the like were taken away unfairly; they will decide whether these lands shall be taken without compensation or whether some compensation shall

be paid, at the expense of the big nobility, to those who bought that land. The peasant committees will at all events release the peasants from the traps into which they were driven by the committees of the nobles. The peasant committees will relieve the peasants of the interference of the officials, they will show that the peasants can and want to manage their own affairs, they will help the peasants to come to a common understanding concerning their needs and to recognise those who really stand for the rural poor and for an alliance with the urban workers. The peasant committees will be a *first step* towards enabling the peasants, in the remote countryside, to stand on their own feet and to take their fate into their own hands.

This is why the Social-Democratic workers warn the peasants:

Not to place any faith in any committees of the nobles, or in any official commissions;

To demand an assembly of deputies elected by the whole people;

To demand the establishment of peasant committees;

To demand complete freedom to publish books and papers of every kind.

When all have the right freely and fearlessly to express their opinions and their wishes in the national assembly of deputies in the peasant committees and in the newspapers, it will soon be seen who is on the side of the working class, and who is on the side of the bourgeoisie. Today, the great majority of the people simply do not think about these things, some conceal their real views, some do not yet know their own minds, some lie deliberately. But when everyone begins thinking about it, there will be no reason for concealing anything, and everything will soon become clear. We have already said that the bourgeoisie will draw the rich peasants to its side. The sooner and the more completely we succeed in abolishing peasant bondage, the more real freedom will the peasants succeed in obtaining for themselves, the sooner will the rural poor unite among themselves and the sooner will the rich peasants unite with the rest of the bourgeoisie. Let them unite: we are not afraid of their uniting, although we know perfectly well that this alliance will make the rich peasants more powerful. But we too shall unite,

and *our alliance*, the alliance between the rural poor and the urban workers, will be immeasurably wider; it will be an alliance of tens of millions against an alliance of hundreds of thousands. We also know that the bourgeoisie will try (it is already trying!) to attract the middle and even the small peasants to its side; it will try to deceive them, to entice them, to sow dissension among them by promising to pull them up into the ranks of the rich. We have seen the tricks and deceits the bourgeoisie resort to in order to win over the middle peasant. We must therefore warn the rural poor beforehand, and beforehand consolidate their special alliance with the urban workers against the bourgeoisie as a whole.

Let every villager look around carefully. How often do we hear the rich peasants talking against the nobility, against the landlords! How they complain of the oppression which the people suffer! or of the landlords' land lying waste! How they like to have a good heart-to-heart talk about what a good thing it would be if the peasants got possession of the land!

Can we believe what the rich say? No, we cannot: they do not want the land for the people, but for themselves. They have accumulated lots of land, in freehold or in leasehold, and still they are not satisfied. *This shows that the rural poor will not have to march side by side with the rich against the landlords very long.* Only the first step will have to be taken in their company, after that their ways will part.

All this shows why we must draw a very clear distinction between this first step and subsequent steps, and our last and most important step. The first step in the rural districts will be the complete emancipation of the peasant, full rights for the peasant and the establishment of peasant committees for the purpose of restoring the *otrezki*. But our last step will be the same everywhere, in town and country alike: *we shall take all the land, all the factories from the landlords and from the bourgeoisie and set up a socialist society.* There will be a lot of fighting in the period between the first step and the last step, *and those who confuse the first step with the last step impede the struggle and unwittingly help to deceive the rural poor,*

The rural poor will take the first step together with all the peasants: a few kulaks may fall out, perhaps there is one peasant in a hundred who does not suffer from bondage in some form or other. The mass of the peasants will continue to advance as one whole, because all the peasants want equal rights. Bondage to the landlords ties everyone hand and foot. But the last step will never be taken by all the peasants together: all the rich peasants will turn against the labourers. Then we shall require a solid alliance between the village poor and the *Social-Democratic workers of the towns*. Those who tell the peasants that they can take the first and the last step simultaneously are deceiving the peasants. They forget about the great struggle going on among the peasants themselves, the great struggle between the rural poor and the rich peasants.

That is why the Social-Democrats do not promise the peasants a land flowing with milk and honey *at once*. That is why the Social-Democrats first of all demand complete freedom for the struggle, for the great popular struggle of the working class against the whole of the bourgeoisie. That is why the Social-Democrats advise a *small but sure first step*.

There are people who imagine that our demand for the establishment of peasant committees for the restriction of bondage and for the restitution of the *otrezki* is a sort of fence or barrier, as if we meant to say: thus far and no further. These people have not given sufficient thought to what the Social-Democrats propose. The demand for the establishment of peasant committees for the restriction of bondage and for the restitution of the *otrezki* is not a barrier. It is a *door*.* We must pass through this door *to be able to go further*, to be able to take the wide and open road *to the ultimate goal*, to the complete emancipation of all the toilers in Russia. Until the peasants pass through this door they will remain in ignorance and bondage, without full rights, without complete, real freedom; they will not even be able to decide among themselves who is the friend of the workingman and who his enemy. That is why the Social-Democrats point to this door and say that the first thing to do is for all the peasantry, for all the people to push at this door and

break it down completely. But there are people who call themselves Narodniki and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who also wish the peasant well; they shout and make a noise and wave their arms about and want to help him, but *they cannot see the door*. And so unseeing are these people that they even say: there is no need to give the peasant the right to dispose of his land as he pleases! They wish the peasant well, but they argue exactly like the serf owners! Such friends can be of little assistance. What is the use of wishing the peasant the very best things in the world if you fail to see the first door that must be forced? What is the use of wanting socialism if you don't see the way out to the road of the free people's struggle for socialism, not only in the towns, but also in the country, and not only against the landlords, but also against the *rich peasants in the village community, in the "mir"?*

That is why the Social-Democrats point so insistently to this first and nearest door. The difficult thing at this stage is not to express a lot of good wishes, but to point to the right road, to make people clearly understand *how the first step should be taken*. For the past forty years all the friends of the peasant have been talking and writing about the Russian peasant being crushed by bondage and about his still being a semi-serf. Long before there were any Social-Democrats in Russia, the friends of the peasant had written dozens of books describing how shamefully the landlords robbed and enslaved the peasant by means of the *otrezki*. All honest people now realise that the peasant must be given assistance at once, without delay, that he must get at least some relief from this bondage; even the officials of our police-ridden government are beginning to discuss this. The question is, *how to set about it, what the first step should be, and which is the first door to be forced*.

Various people (those who wish the peasant well) answer this question in one of two ways. Every rural proletarian must try to understand these two answers to the question, and form a definite opinion on them. The Narodniki and the Socialist-Revolutionaries answer the question in one way. The first thing to be done, they say, is to develop all sorts of societies (co-opera-

tive societies) among the peasants. The *mir* must be strengthened. The individual peasant must not be given the right to dispose of his land freely. Let the rights of the community, the *mir*, be extended, and let all the land in Russia gradually become communal land. The peasants must be granted every facility to purchase land, so that the land may more easily pass from capital to labour.

The Social-Democrats' answer is different. The peasant must first of all obtain for himself all the rights possessed by the nobility and the merchants. The peasant must obtain the unrestricted right freely to dispose of his land. Peasant committees must be established for the abolition of the more despicable forms of bondage and for the restitution of the *otrezki*. We want not the unity of the *mir*, but the unity of the rural poor in the rural communities all over Russia, the alliance of the rural proletarians with the urban proletarians. Co-operatives and the communal purchase of land will always be most profitable for the rich peasants, and will always help to hoodwink the middle peasants.

The Russian government realises that some relief must be given to the peasants, but it wants to be let off for next to nothing, it wants everything to be done by the officials. The peasants must be on the look-out, because the official commissions will cheat them as badly as the committees of the nobles did. The peasants must demand the institution of freely elected peasant committees. The important thing is, not to expect improvement from the officials, but for the peasants to take their fate into their own hands. Even if we at first take only one step, even if we at first abolish only the worst forms of bondage—at least the peasants will realise their power, will freely reach an understanding with each other and unite! No honest person can deny that the *otrezki* are often made the instrument of the most despicable feudal bondage. No honest person can deny that our demand is the first and fairest of demands: let the peasants freely, without the officials, elect *their own* committees for the abolition of feudal bondage.

In the free peasant committees (as well as in the free assembly

of representatives of the whole of Russia) the Social-Democrats will do all they can from the outset to consolidate the special alliance of the rural proletarians with the urban proletarians. The Social-Democrats will advocate all measures that are favourable to the rural proletarians and will help them to follow up the first step—as early as possible and as unanimously as possible—with the second and the third step, and so on till the very end, till the complete *victory of the proletariat*. But can we say today what demand will arise tomorrow for the second step? No, we cannot because we do not know what the behaviour of the rich peasants will be, and of many educated people who are concerned about co-operatives and about the land passing from capital to labour.

Perhaps they will not join the landlords on the morrow; perhaps they will want to finish off landlord rule completely. Very good! The Social-Democrats would like this to happen very much, and they will advise the rural and the urban proletarians to demand that all the land be taken from the landlords and be transferred to the free people's state. The Social-Democrats will see to it that the rural proletarians are not cheated in the course of this, and that they consolidate their forces for the final struggle for the complete emancipation of the proletariat.

But things may take a very different turn; in fact it is more likely that they will take a different turn. On the very day after the worst forms of bondage have been restricted and curtailed, the rich peasants and many of the educated people may unite with the landlords, and then the rural proletariat as a whole will have the whole of the rural bourgeoisie against it. In that event it would be ridiculous for us to go on fighting only against the landlords. We would have to fight the bourgeoisie as a whole, and our first demand would have to be: the greatest possible freedom and elbow room for this fight, improved conditions for the workers in order to make the fight easier for them.

In any case, whatever turn things may take, our first, our principal and indispensable task is *to consolidate the alliance between the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians and the*

urban proletarians. To obtain this we must at once and without delay *secure unrestricted political freedom for the people, complete equality of rights for the peasants and the abolition of feudal bondage.* And when this alliance is established and consolidated, it will be easy for us to expose all the deceits to which the bourgeoisie resorts in order to attract the middle peasant, we shall easily and quickly take the second and third and last steps against the whole of the bourgeoisie, against all the government forces, we shall march straight to victory and quickly achieve the *complete emancipation of all the toilers.*

7. THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

What is the *class struggle*? It is the struggle of one part of the people against the other, the struggle waged by all the disfranchised, the oppressed, the toilers, against the privileged, the oppressors, the parasites; the struggle of the wage labourers, or proletarians, against the property owners, or bourgeoisie. In the rural districts of Russia, too, this great struggle has always gone on and is now going on, although not everyone is aware of it, and although not everyone realises its significance. In the period of serfdom the peasants as a whole fought against their oppressors, the landlord class, which was protected, defended and supported by the tsarist government. The peasants then were unable to unite, they were utterly crushed by ignorance; they had no urban workers to help them and be brothers to them; nevertheless they fought as best they could. They were not afraid of the brutal persecution of the government, they were not afraid of execution and bullets, they did not believe the priests who tried hard to prove that serfdom was approved by the Bible and sanctified by God (this is what the Metropolitan Philaret actually said), the peasants rose in rebellion, now in one place and now in another, and at last the government gave in, fearing a general insurrection of all the peasants.

Serfdom was abolished, but not altogether. The peasants remained disfranchised, they remained an inferior, poll-tax-paying, "black" estate, they remained in the clutches of feudal bondage. And the unrest among the peasants continued, they

continued to seek complete, real freedom. Meanwhile, a new class struggle developed, the *struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie*. Wealth increased, railways and factories were built in great numbers, the towns grew still more populous and full of luxury, but all this wealth was appropriated by a very few, while the people became poorer, more impoverished and starved, and they had to leave their homes to go and work for wages among strangers. The urban workers began a great struggle of all the poor against all the rich. The urban workers united to form a *Social-Democratic Party* and to carry on the struggle persistently, determinedly and unitedly, advancing step by step, preparing for the great final struggle, demanding political liberty for all the people.

At last the peasants, too, lost patience. In the spring of last year, 1902, the peasants of the Poltava, Kharkov and other gubernias rose and marched against the landlords, broke into their barns, shared the contents among themselves, distributed to the starving the grain that had been sown and reaped by the peasants but appropriated by the landlords, and demanded a new repartition of the land. The peasants were no longer able to bear the endless oppression, and they began to seek a better lot. The peasants decided—and rightly decided—that it was better to die fighting the oppressors than to die from starvation without a fight. But they did not succeed in winning a better lot for themselves. The tsarist government declared them to be common rioters and robbers (for having taken from the robber landlords corn that the peasants themselves had sown and reaped!), it sent troops against them as against an enemy, and the peasants were defeated; the peasants were shot down, many were killed; they were all brutally flogged, many were flogged to death; they were tortured worse than the Turks tortured their enemies, the Christians. The tsar's envoys, the governors, were the worst torturers, real professional torturers. The soldiers raped the wives and daughters of the peasants. And in addition to all this, these peasants were tried by a court of officials, they were compelled to pay the landlords 700,000 rubles, and at the trial, that infamous secret trial, a trial in a torture chamber,

counsel were not even allowed to tell how the peasants had been ill-treated and tortured by the tsar's envoys, Governor Obolensky and the other servants of the tsar.

The peasants fought in a just cause. The Russian working class will always honour the memory of the martyrs who were shot down and flogged to death by the servants of the tsar. These martyrs fought for the freedom and happiness of the toilers. The peasants suffered defeat, but they will rise again and again, undeterred by this first defeat. The class conscious workers will do all they can to inform the largest possible number of toilers in town and country of the peasants' struggle and to prepare for a further and more successful fight. The class conscious workers will do all in their power to help the peasants *clearly to understand why the first peasant insurrection of 1902 was put down and what must be done in order to secure victory for the peasants and workers and not for the servants of the tsar.*

The peasant insurrection was put down because it was the insurrection of an ignorant and unintelligent mass, an insurrection that advanced no *political* demands, *i.e.*, no demands for changes in the constitution of the *state*. The peasant insurrection was put down because no *preparations had been made for it beforehand*. The peasant insurrection was put down because the rural proletarians had not yet allied themselves with the urban proletarians. These are the three causes of the defeat of the peasants in the first fight. To be successful the insurrection must have a conscious aim, preparations must be made for it beforehand, it must spread to the whole of Russia and must be organised in alliance with the urban workers. And every advance in the struggle of the urban workers, every Social-Democratic book or newspaper, every speech made by a class conscious worker to the rural proletarians will serve to bring nearer the time when the insurrection will be repeated and end in victory.

The peasants rose without a conscious aim, because they could bear their sufferings no longer, because they refused to go on dying like dumb brutes, without a fight. The peasants had suffered so much from robbery, oppression and torment that they could not but believe, if only for a moment, the vague rumours

about the tsar's mercy, they could not but believe that every sensible man would regard it as just that grain should be distributed among hungry people, among those who had worked all their lives for others, who had sown and reaped, and were now starving, while the "gentry's" barns were full to overflowing. The peasants seemed to have forgotten that all the best land and the factories had been seized by the rich, by the landlords and the bourgeoisie precisely for the purpose of starving the people into working for the property owners. The peasants forgot that the rich class is defended not only by the sermons of the priests, but also by the tsarist government with its myriads of bureaucrats and soldiers. The tsarist government reminded the peasants of all this. It brutally showed the peasants what state authority is, whose servant and whose protector it is. We must remind the peasants of this lesson again and again, and then they will easily understand why it is necessary to *change the constitution of the state* and why we need *political liberty*. Peasant insurrections will have a conscious aim when larger and larger numbers of people understand all this, when every peasant who can read and write and who thinks for himself becomes familiar with *the three principal demands* which must be fought for first of all. The first demand is that a *national assembly of deputies* be convened *with the object of establishing a popular representative government in Russia instead of the present autocratic government*. The second demand is that *everyone be free to publish any book or newspaper he pleases*. The third demand is that *the complete equality of rights of the peasants with the other estates be recognised by law and that elected peasant committees be convened, with the primary object of abolishing all forms of feudal bondage*. These are the main and fundamental demands of the Social-Democrats, and the peasants will not find it difficult to understand them, to understand *what to begin with* in the struggle for the people's liberty. When the peasants have understood these demands, they will also understand that *preparations* for the fight must be made beforehand, by long, persistent and determined work, and that this must not be done in isolation, but together with the Social-Democratic workers in the towns.

Let every class conscious worker and peasant rally round himself the most intelligent, reliable and fearless comrades. Let him explain to them what the Social-Democrats want so that every one of them may understand the struggle that must be carried on and the demands that must be made. Let the class conscious Social-Democrats begin gradually, cautiously, but unswervingly, to teach the peasants the doctrines of Social-Democracy, give them Social-Democratic books to read and explain these books at small gatherings of reliable people.

But the doctrines of Social-Democracy cannot be taught from books alone; every instance, every case of oppression and injustice we encounter must be used to illustrate these doctrines. Social-Democracy is the doctrine of struggle against every form of oppression, against every form of robbery and injustice. A true Social-Democrat is one who knows the causes of oppression and who, *all his life, fights every case of oppression*. How can this be done? The class conscious Social-Democrats must meet in their town or village and decide for themselves how it can be done to the best advantage of the whole working class. To show how it can be done, let me give one or two instances. Let us suppose that a Social-Democratic worker has come on a visit to his village, or that any Social-Democratic worker has come to any village. The village, like a fly in a spider's web, is entirely in the power of the neighbouring landlord; it cannot rid itself of its bondage, cannot escape from this bondage. The worker must at once single out the most sensible, intelligent and reliable peasants, who are keen on seeing justice done and who will not be frightened by the first police dog they encounter, and explain the causes of this endless bondage, tell them how the landlords cheated the peasants and robbed them with the aid of the committees of the nobles, tell them how powerful the rich are and how they are supported by the tsarist government. He must also tell them about the demands of the Social-Democratic workers. When the peasants have understood all this, the next thing they must do is to put their heads together and devise some way of resisting the landlord, some way of presenting their first and principal demands,

in the same way as the urban workers present their demands to the manufacturers. If it is several villages, or one big village, that are held in bondage by the landlord, the best thing to do will be to obtain a *leaflet* from the nearest Social-Democratic committee, with the aid of reliable people; in that leaflet the Social-Democratic committee will describe in detail the bondage the peasants suffer from and will formulate their first demands: reduction of rent, fair terms for labourers on winter hire, no brutal persecution of the peasant when his cattle trespass on the landlord's land, or other appropriate demands. A leaflet like this will show all the peasants who can read and write what the issue is, and those who cannot read will have it explained to them. Then the peasants will see that the Social-Democrats are their friends and that the Social-Democrats condemn all robbery. Then the peasants will begin to understand what improvements, if only slight ones, can be obtained immediately and what are the larger improvements for the whole country that will have to be obtained by fighting together with the Social-Democratic workers in the towns. Then the peasants will prepare for the great struggle, they will learn how to find reliable people and how to stand unitedly for their demands. Sometimes they may succeed in organising a strike, as the urban workers do. Certainly this is more difficult in the country than in the towns, but it is not impossible; in foreign countries there have been successful strikes of farm labourers in the rural districts, for instance, in the busy season when the landlords and rich farmers need hands badly. If the rural poor are prepared for the strike, if a general agreement has been reached about the demands to be made, if these demands have been explained in a leaflet, or properly explained at meetings, all will stand together as one man and the landlord will have to give in, or at any rate put a curb on his greed. If the strike is unanimous and is started during the busy season, the landlord and even the authorities with their troops will find it hard to do anything—the landlord will be afraid of losing the season and he will soon become more tractable. Certainly strikes are something new, and new things do not come off well at first. The urban workers did

not know how to fight unitedly at first, they did not know what demands to put forward. They would go and break the machines and wreck the factory. But now the workers have learned to stand by each other in a fight. Every new job must be learned. Now the workers understand that they can obtain immediate relief if only they act unitedly; meanwhile, the people are learning to put up united resistance and are more and more preparing for the great and decisive struggle. Similarly, the peasants will learn to stand up against the worst robbers, to be united in their demands for some measure of relief and to prepare gradually, persistently and all over the country for the great fight for freedom. The number of class conscious workers and peasants will grow, and the leagues of rural Social-Democrats will become stronger; every case of bondage imposed by the landlord, of extortion on the part of the priest, of police brutality and bureaucratic oppression, will serve to open the eyes of the people, accustom them to the idea of resistance and of securing a change in the constitution by force.

At the very beginning of this book we said that the urban workers come out into the streets and squares and publicly demand *freedom*, that they inscribe on their banners and cry: "Down with the Autoeracy!" The day will soon come when the urban workers will no longer merely march down the streets shouting, but will rise for the great and final struggle; when the workers will declare as one man: "We shall secure freedom, or die fighting"; when thousands of fresh and more resolute fighters will rise to take the place of the hundreds who are killed or fall in the fight. The peasants, too, will then rise throughout the length and breadth of Russia, march to the assistance of the urban workers and fight to the end for the freedom of the workers and peasants. The tsar's hosts will be unable to withstand this attack. Victory will go to the workers, and the working class will march along the wide road to the liberation of all toilers from oppression. The working class will use its freedom to fight for socialism!

THE AGRARIAN PROGRAMME OF RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY*

CHAPTER VII

. . . We shall now proceed to consider the arguments that have been advanced by the doubters.^{1**} These arguments may be summed up under the following heads: a) Is the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki* consistent with the theoretical principles of Marxism and with the principles of the Social-Democratic programme? b) Is it rational from the point of view of political expediency to advance the demand for the righting of a historical wrong, the significance of which is diminishing with every step in economic development? c) Is the demand practically attainable? d) Admitting that we can and must advance such a demand and include in our agrarian programme something that is not a minimum but a maximum, is the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki* consistent from this point of view? Is such a demand actually a maximum?

As far as I can judge, *all* the objections "against the *otrezki*" can be included under one of these four points; most of my opponents (including Martynov) answered all four questions in the negative, and consider the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki* to be theoretically wrong, politically inexpedient, practically unattainable and logically inconsistent.

Let us now consider all these questions in the order of their importance.

a) Two reasons are given for considering the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki* to be wrong from the point of view of principle. In the first place, we are told that it will "affect" capitalist agriculture, *i.e.*, hold up or delay the progress of cap-

¹ Lenin applies the term doubters to those who raised objections to the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki*.—*Ed.*

italism; in the second place, we are told that it will not only fortify, but multiply small holdings. The first of these arguments (particularly emphasised by Martynov) is quite groundless; on the contrary, typical *otrezki* retard the progress of capitalism, and their restitution will only stimulate the progress of the latter; as for cases which are not typical (apart from exceptions which are always possible and which only prove the rule), a reservation was made both in *Iskra* and in the programme ("... land which was cut off and which serves as an instrument of bondage ..."). The objection arises simply from a lack of appreciation of the importance of *otrezki* and *otrabotki* in Russian rural economy.

The second argument (which was elaborated in particular detail in private correspondence) is much more serious and is quite the strongest argument against the programme we are here defending. Speaking generally, it is not the business of the Social-Democrats to develop, encourage, fortify, still less multiply small-scale farming or small property. But the point is that we are not faced with a "general" but with an *exceptional* case of small-scale farming, and this exceptional character is *clearly expressed* in the preamble to our agrarian programme: "the abolition of the survivals of serfdom and the free development of the class struggle in the countryside." Speaking *generally*, the encouragement of small property is reactionary, *because* it is directed against large-scale *capitalist* economy and, consequently, retards the social revolution, and obscures and glosses over the class struggle. But in this case we want to support small property not against capitalism, but against feudalism; in this case, by supporting the small peasantry we give a tremendous impetus to the development of the class struggle. Indeed, on the one hand, we, by this, make a *last* attempt to fan the embers of the class ("estate") enmity of the peasants towards the feudal landlords. On the other hand, we pave the way for the development of the bourgeois antagonism of classes in the countryside, because that antagonism is still *masked* by what is supposed to be the common and equal oppression of all the peasants by the survivals of serfdom,

Everything in the world has two sides to it. In the West the peasant property owner has already played his part in the democratic movement, and he now defends his privileged position as compared with the proletariat. In Russia the peasant property owner is still on the eve of a determined democratic movement of the whole people, with which he cannot but sympathise. He still looks forward rather than backward. He is still much more a fighter against "estate" and feudal privileges, which are still so strong in Russia, than a defender of his own privileged position. In a historic moment *like the present* it is our duty to support the peasants and to try to guide their vague and blind discontent against their real enemy. At a future stage in history, when the special features of the present social and political "situation" have disappeared, when the peasants, let us suppose, have been satisfied by some insignificant doles granted to an insignificant number of property owners and definitely begin "snarling" at the proletariat, we shall not be in the least inconsistent if we delete the struggle against the survivals of serfdom from our programme. But then, most probably, we shall also have to delete the struggle against tsarism from our programme, for it is inconceivable that the peasants will succeed in ridding themselves of the most disgusting and offensive forms of feudal oppression *before* political liberty has been attained.

Under capitalist economy, small property retards the development of productive forces by binding the worker to a small plot of land, by sanctifying routine in technique, by preventing the land from being drawn into the channels of commerce. Where the *otrabotki*-system predominates, small landed property by ridding itself of *otrabotki* stimulates the development of productive forces, releases the peasant from the bondage that binds him to one spot, relieves the landlord of "unpaid" servants, deprives him of the possibility of substituting the unlimited aggravation of "patriarchal" exploitation for technical improvements, and facilitates the drawing of the land into the channels of commerce. In a word, the contradictory position of the small peasantry on the borderline between serfdom and capitalist economy entirely justifies the exceptional and temporary sup-

port of small holdings by the Social-Democrats. We shall repeat it once more: it is not a contradiction in the wording or in the formulation of our programme, but a contradiction in real life.

It may be argued: "However slowly *otrabotki* farming may be yielding to the advance of capitalism, still it is yielding, it is, in fact, doomed to disappear altogether; large-scale *otrabotki* farming is being replaced, and will be directly replaced, by large-scale capitalist farming. Now you want to accelerate the process of liquidation of serfdom by a measure which, in essence, amounts to the parcellation (the partial parcellation, no doubt, but nevertheless parcellation) of large-scale farms. In doing so, are you not sacrificing the interests of the future for the interests of the present? For the sake of the problematical possibility of a peasant revolt against serfdom in the immediate future, you are placing obstacles in the way of the revolt of the agricultural proletariat against capitalism in the more or less distant future!"

This line of reasoning, however convincing it may seem on the face of it, is very one-sided: in the first place, the small peasantry is also yielding—slowly no doubt, but nevertheless yielding—to the advance of capitalism, and it is ultimately doomed to inevitable elimination; in the second place, large-scale *otrabotki* farming is not always "directly" replaced by large-scale capitalist farming; very often it gives rise to semi-independent, semi-proletarian semi-proprietors. A revolutionary measure like the restitution of the *otrezki* would render a great service precisely by substituting the "method" of open revolutionary transformation for the "method" of gradual and imperceptible transformation of feudal dependence into bourgeois dependence: this *could not possibly* happen without *exercising the profoundest influence* on the spirit of protest and of independent struggle of all the rural toiling population. In the third place, we Russian Social-Democrats must try to avail ourselves of the experience of Europe, and must begin to attract the "country people" to the socialist labour movement at a much earlier stage and much more zealously than our Western comrades were able to do. They continued to "grope" for the direction the movement

of the industrial workers was to take long after political liberty had been won: in this sphere we shall have to take much that is ready-made "from the Germans," but as far as the agrarian sphere is concerned we may evolve something new. And in order to make the transition to socialism easier for our rural labourers and semi-labourers, it is highly important that the Socialist Party *at once* begin to "intercede" on behalf of the small peasants and to do "all it can" for them; it must never refuse a hand in solving the very urgent and very complicated problems of "others" (other than proletarians), and it must teach all the toiling and exploited masses to regard it as their leader and their representative.

To proceed.

b) The demand for the restitution of the *otrezki* is considered to be politically inexpedient: it is inexpedient to divert the attention of the Party from the fundamental and steadily approaching issue of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to righting all sorts of historical wrongs which are already beginning to lose their significance. The idea, says Martynov sarcastically, "is to re-emancipate the peasants forty years too late."

This argument, too, appears to be plausible only on the face of it. There are historical wrongs and historical wrongs. There are wrongs which are left on one side of the main stream of history, as it were, which erect no barrier and which do not dam the stream, which do not prevent the proletarian class struggle from extending and from striking deeper roots. It would certainly not be wise to try to right historical wrongs of this kind. As an example, we shall cite the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany. No Social-Democratic Party would think of including in its programme the righting of a wrong of *this* kind, although, on the other hand, not one would shirk its duty of protesting against this injustice and of condemning all the ruling classes for having perpetrated it. If, as our reason and our only reason for demanding the restitution of the *otrezki*, we had said: "Look here, a wrong has been committed, let us right it," this would have been no more than a

hollow democratic phrase. We do not justify our demand by whimpering over a historical wrong, but by insisting on the necessity of abolishing all survivals of serfdom and of clearing the road for the class struggle in the rural districts; and this is something of which the proletariat stands in very "practical" and very urgent need.

We have in this case a *different* kind of historical wrong, a wrong which still *directly retards* social evolution and the class struggle. To renounce the effort to right a historical wrong of *this* kind would mean "defending the knout on the ground that it is a historical knout." The problem of freeing the country from the burden of the survivals of the "old order" is one of the most urgent questions of the day; its urgency is admitted by all schools of thought and all parties (except the feudal party), so that the reference to our being late is pointless and, coming as it does from Martynov, simply comical. It is the Russian bourgeoisie who were "late" with what is really *their own* task of sweeping away all the remnants of the old order, and it is we who will have to make good this omission, as long as it has not been made good, as long as we have not obtained political liberty, as long as the position of the peasants continues to foster discontent among practically the whole of educated bourgeois society (as is the case in Russia), instead of fostering conservative self-satisfaction about the "indestructibility" of what is supposed to be the strongest bulwark against socialism (as is the case in the West where this self-satisfaction is displayed by all the parties of order from the agrarians and conservatives *pur sang*, the liberal and free-thinking bourgeois, to—without offence to Mr. Chernov and the *Vestnik Russkoy Revolyutsii*¹—even to the fashionable "critics of Marxism"* in the agrarian question). Then, of course, those Russian Social-Democrats who trudge in the rear of the movement as a matter of principle, and who are only concerned with questions "promising palpable results,"² were also "late," and because they were late in giving

¹ The theoretical journal of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party; published from June 1901 to March 1905; four numbers appeared.—*Ed.*

² Lenin alludes to the Social-Democrats of the group known as the

definite directives on the agrarian question, these *khvostists* have only succeeded in providing the non-Social-Democratic revolutionaries with a very strong and reliable weapon.

As for c) the practical "unattainability" of the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki*, this objection (which has been particularly emphasised by Martynov) is one of the feeblest. When we have political liberty, the question of how the expropriation is to be carried out, in which concrete cases and how the compensation, exchange, the division of the land, etc., are to be arranged, will be solved by the peasant committees ten times more easily than it was by the committees of the nobles which consisted of representatives of a minority and acted in the interests of the minority. Only those who are accustomed to underestimating the revolutionary initiative of the masses can attach any importance to this objection.

At this point the fourth and last objection is raised. If we are to count on the revolutionary initiative of the peasants and offer them a maximum programme and not a minimum programme, we must be consistent and demand either a "peasant" *cherny peredel*¹ or a "bourgeois" nationalisation of the land. "If," writes Martynov, "we wanted to find a proper" (*sic!*) "class slogan for the mass of the small peasantry we should have to go a step further and advance the demand for *cherny peredel*, but then we should have to part with the Social-Democratic programme."

This reasoning exposes the "Economist" very vividly and reminds us of the proverb about those who, when they are compelled to pray, do it with such zeal that they smash their foreheads on the ground.

You have pronounced yourselves in favour of *one* of the demands satisfying *certain* interests of a certain stratum of small

"Economists." See "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats" in *selected Works* Vol. I, pp. 516-27, and *What Is To Be Done?* in this volume.—*Ed.*

¹ *Cherny peredel* [the "black (*i.e.*, general, peasant) redistribution" of the land—*Ed. Eng. ed.*] was the desire of the peasants after the Reform of 1861 for a repartition of the land which would abolish the large landlord estates and establish, as the peasants believed, the equal right of all to the land. *Cherny peredel* was the slogan of the Narodniki.—*Ed.*

producers; *therefore*, you must abandon your own point of view and adopt the point of view of that stratum!! It means nothing of the sort; only *khvostists*, only those who confuse the drawing up of a programme that conforms to the broadly understood interests of a class with subservience to that class, can reason in this way. Although we represent the proletariat, we nevertheless condemn the prejudice of backward proletarians, *viz.*, that one must only fight for demands "promising palpable results." While supporting the progressive interests and demands of the peasants, we shall decisively reject their reactionary demands. *Cherny peredel*, one of the most vivid slogans of the old Narodniki, represents just such a combination of revolutionary and reactionary elements. The Social-Democrats have stated dozens of times that they do not, with the stupidity of a certain unintelligent bird, throw the whole of Narodism overboard, but single out and take for their own its revolutionary and democratic elements. The demand for *cherny peredel* expresses the reactionary utopian idea of generalising and perpetuating small-scale peasant production, but in addition (in addition to the utopian idea that the "peasantry" may serve as the vehicle of the *socialist* revolution) it expresses a revolutionary aspect, namely, the desire to sweep away, by means of a peasant insurrection, all the remnants of serfdom. In our opinion the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki* singles out, from all the ambiguous and contradictory demands of the peasant, precisely that which can have a revolutionary effect only in the direction which the whole evolution of society is taking, and which, consequently, deserves the support of the proletariat. Martynov's invitation to us to "go further" will in reality only land us in the absurd position of having to define the "*genuine*" class slogan of the peasantry from the standpoint of the *present prejudices* of the peasantry, and not from that of the *properly interpreted* interests of the proletariat.

Nationalisation of the land* is a different matter. This demand (if it is interpreted in the bourgeois and not in the socialist sense) does actually "go further" than the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki*, and in principle we fully endorse it.

It goes without saying that at a definite stage of the revolution we shall not fail to advance it. But our present programme is drawn up not only for the epoch of revolutionary insurrection, nor even so much for that epoch as for the epoch of political slavery, for the epoch that precedes political liberty. In this epoch the demand for the nationalisation of the land is a *much more imperfect* expression of the immediate tasks of the democratic movement as a struggle against serfdom. The demand for the establishment of peasant committees and for the restitution of the *otrezki* directly kindles the class struggle in the rural districts, and consequently offers no opportunity for any experiments in the way of state socialism. The demand for the nationalisation of the land, on the other hand, would, to a certain extent, serve to divert attention from the most striking manifestations and strongest survivals of serfdom. That is why our agrarian programme can and must be advanced at once, as one of the means of stimulating the democratic movement among the peasants. However, to advance the demand for land nationalisation under the autocracy, or even under a semi-constitutional monarchy, would be fundamentally wrong. For as long as we lack firmly established and deep-rooted democratic institutions, such a demand would be more likely to turn our minds towards absurd experiments in state socialism, than to give a stimulus "to the free development of the class struggle in the countryside."¹

These are our reasons for thinking that our agrarian programme, on the basis of the present social order, should not contain a maximum demand that would go beyond the democratic revision of the Peasant Reform.* The demand for land nationalisation is quite valid in principle and quite suitable at certain stages, but it is politically inexpedient at the present moment.

¹ Kautsky very rightly remarks "in one of his articles against Vollmar: "In England the advanced workers may demand the nationalisation of the land. But what would be the result, in a militarist and police-ridden country like Germany, of all the land becoming crown property (*eine Domäne*)? This sort of state socialism has been realised, to a considerable degree at least, in Mecklenburg." ("Vollmar und der Staatssozialismus," *Die Neue Zeit*, 1891-92, X, 2, S. 710.)

It is interesting to note that Nadezhdin, in his desire to reach a maximum, like land nationalisation, has lost his way (partly owing to his decision to confine himself in the programme "to demands which can be *understood* by the muzhik and which he requires"). Nadezhdin formulates the demand for land nationalisation in the following way: "the conversion of state, appanage, church and landlord land into the property of the people, into a national fund to be leased on long-term leases to the toiling peasants on the most advantageous terms." The "muzhik" will, no doubt, understand the demand, but the Social-Democrat certainly will not. The demand for land nationalisation is a demand of the Social-Democratic programme, valid in principle only as a bourgeois and not as a socialist measure, for, as Socialists, we demand the nationalisation of all means of production. As long as we remain within the bounds of bourgeois society we can only demand the transfer of ground rent to the state—a transfer which in itself, far from retarding, would accelerate the capitalist evolution of agriculture. It follows that, in the first place, a Social-Democrat who supports bourgeois land nationalisation must make no exception for the peasants' land as Nadezhdin does. If we preserve *private farming* on the land, and only abolish private property in land, it would be downright reactionary to make an exception for the small proprietor. In the second place, in the event of nationalisation, a Social-Democrat should decidedly oppose the leasing of land "to the toiling peasantry" in preference to capitalist farmers. Such a preference would also be reactionary if the capitalist mode of production remained dominant or were preserved. If a democratic country ever undertook to carry out bourgeois land nationalisation, it would be the duty of the proletariat of that country to show no preference either for small or big leaseholders, but to demand unconditionally that every leaseholder obey the protection of labour laws (maximum working hours, sanitary regulations, etc.) and the laws for the rational treatment of land and livestock. In practice, the adoption of such a policy by the proletariat in the event of bourgeois nationalisation would, of course, accelerate the victory of large-scale over small-scale pro-

duction (in the same way as factory legislation accelerates the victory in industry).

The desire to be "understood by the muzhik" at all costs has landed Nadezhdin in a jungle of reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia.

Thus, the analysis of the objections raised against the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki* convinces us of the groundlessness of these objections. We must put forward the demand for the democratic revision of the Peasant Reform, to be precise, the revision of the agrarian reform contained in it. In order to determine the precise character, the limits and the manner of carrying out this revision we must demand the establishment of peasant committees which shall have the right to expropriate, buy out, exchange, etc., the *otrezki*, which are used as a means for preserving the survivals of serf economy.

February-March 1902.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN OUR PROGRAMME*

WE have included in our draft Party programme the demand for a republic with a democratic constitution that would, among other things, assure "the recognition of the right of self-determination to all the nationalities contained in the state." As many did not find this point in our programme sufficiently clear, we took occasion, in speaking about the Manifesto of the Armenian Social-Democrats in issue No. 33, to explain the meaning of this point** in the following way: the Social-Democrats will always combat every attempt to influence national self-determination by violence or by any injustice from without. But our unqualified recognition of the struggle for the right of self-determination does not commit us to supporting every demand for national self-determination. Social-Democracy, as the party of the proletariat, considers it to be its positive and principal task to advance the self-determination of the working class within each nationality rather than the self-determination of peoples and nationalities. We must always and unconditionally strive to achieve the closest unity of the proletariat of all nationalities, and only in isolated and exceptional cases may we advance and actively support demands tending to set up a new class state or to substitute a loose federal unity for the complete political unity of a state.

This interpretation of our programme on the question of nationalities has called forth a strong protest on the part of the Polish Socialist Party*** (P.P.S.). In an article entitled "The Attitude of Russian Social-Democracy on the Question of Nationalities" (*Przedsvit*,¹ March 1903), the P.P.S. expresses in-

¹ *Dawn*; the leading organ of the Polish Socialist Party. The article was an unsigned programme article; that is why Lenin does not address himself to individuals but to the Party as a whole.—*Ed.*

dignation at this "amazing" interpretation and at the "haziness" of this "mysterious" self-determination of ours; it accuses us of being doctrinaire and of adhering to the "anarchist" view that "the worker is not concerned with anything but the complete abolition of capitalism, because, we are told, language, nationality, culture, etc., are mere bourgeois inventions," and so on. It is worth considering this argument in detail, for it contains nearly every one of the misunderstandings on the question of nationalities that are so usual and so current among Socialists.

What is it that makes our interpretation so "amazing"? Why does it deviate from the "literal" meaning? Does the recognition of the *right* of self-determination imply *support* of every demand of every nationality for self-determination? The fact that we recognise the *right* of all citizens *to form free associations does not commit us*—Social-Democrats—to *supporting* every new association, nor does it prevent us from opposing the formation of a given association and agitating against it as inexpedient and unwise. We *even* recognise the right of the Jesuits to carry on agitation freely, but we fight against an alliance between the Jesuits and the proletarians (of course we do not fight by means of police measures). Consequently, when *Przedsvit* says: "if the demand for the right of self-determination is taken literally (and that is how we have hitherto taken it) it would satisfy us completely"—it is quite obvious that it is precisely the P.P.S. that deviates from the literal meaning of the programme. From the formal point of view its conclusion is certainly illogical.

But we do not wish to confine ourselves to the formal verification of our interpretation. We shall go straight to the essence of the question: is it the bounden duty of the Social-Democrats always to demand national independence, or is it such only under certain circumstances, and if so, under what circumstances? The P.P.S. has always answered this question in favour of unqualified recognition; we are not in the least surprised, therefore, at the tenderness it displays towards the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries who demand a federal constitution and pronounce themselves in favour of "the complete and unqualified recognition of national self-determination." (*Revolyutsionnaya*

Rossiya, No. 18, "National Enslavement and Revolutionary Socialism.") Unfortunately, this is nothing more than one of those bourgeois-democratic phrases which for the hundredth and thousandth time reveal the real nature of the so-called party of the so-called Socialist-Revolutionaries. That the P.P.S. should succumb to the lure of these phrases and be seduced by them only proves how feeble is its connection with the class struggle of the proletariat, both as regards its theoretical understanding and its political practice. But it is to the interests of this class struggle that we must *subordinate* the demand for national self-determination. It is this that makes all the difference between our approach and the bourgeois-democratic approach to the national question. The bourgeois democrat (and the modern opportunist Socialist who walks in his footsteps) imagines that democracy eliminates the class struggle; and that is why he presents all his political demands in an abstract, sweeping "unqualified" way from the standpoint of the interests of the "whole people" or even from that of an eternal and absolute moral principle. The Social-Democrat will always and everywhere ruthlessly expose this bourgeois illusion, whether it finds expression in an abstract idealist philosophy or in the unqualified demand for national independence.

If it is still necessary to prove that a Marxist can only recognise the demand for national independence conditionally, on the condition we have indicated, then let us quote a writer who, from the Marxian point of view, has defended the Polish proletarians who demand an independent Poland. In 1896, in an article entitled "Finis Poloniæ?" Karl Kautsky wrote:

"From the moment the proletariat tackles the Polish question it cannot but pronounce itself in favour of the independence of Poland, and consequently it cannot but approve of every step which may be taken in this direction today, in so far as such a step would be consonant with the class interests of the international fighting proletariat. This reservation, however," Kautsky goes on to say, "must be made. *National independence is not so inseverably linked with the class interests of the fighting proletariat that it should be striven for unconditionally, under any circumstance.*¹ Marx and Engels were most decidedly in favour of the unity and liberation of Italy, but this did not prevent them from pronounc-

¹ Our italics.

ing themselves, in 1859, against an Italy allied with Napoleon III." (*Die Neue Zeit*, XIV, 2, S. 520.)

As you see, Kautsky definitely rejects the *unconditional* demand for the independence of nations, and definitely demands that the question be placed not merely on a historical but on a class basis. And when we turn to the way Marx and Engels formulated the Polish question we shall see that that was the way they stated it from the outset. *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung* devoted much space to the Polish question; it not only definitely demanded the independence of Poland, but it demanded that Germany go to war with Russia for the independence of Poland. But at the same time Marx violently attacked Ruge who had spoken in favour of Polish liberty in the Frankfort Parliament and had tried to solve the Polish problem exclusively with the aid of bourgeois-democratic phrases about "shameful injustice" and without any attempt to analyse it historically. Marx was not like those pedants and philistines of the revolution who dread nothing more than "polemics" at a revolutionary moment in history. Marx heaped pitiless scorn on the "humane" citizen Ruge, and, using the example of the oppression of the South of France by the North of France, proved to him that not every case of national oppression inspires a desire for independence that is justified from the point of view of democracy and of the proletariat. Marx referred to special social circumstances which made

"Poland the revolutionary section of Russia, Austria and Prussia. . . . Even the Polish nobility, although its foundations were still partly feudal, adhered to the democratic agrarian revolution with unprecedented devotion. Poland became the hearth of European democracy at a time when Germany was still submerged in the most vulgar constitutional and high-flown philosophical ideology. . . . As long as we (the Germans) help to oppress Poland, as long as we keep part of Poland riveted to Germany, we ourselves will remain riveted to Russia and to Russian policy, we shall be unable to free ourselves radically from our patriarchal feudal absolutism. The creation of a democratic Poland is the first condition for the creation of a democratic Germany."

We have quoted these statements in such detail because they show graphically the historical circumstances under which the Polish question was formulated for international Social-Dem-

ocracy, a formula which lasted for almost the whole of the second half of the nineteenth century. To ignore the changed circumstances, and to go on advocating the old solution given by Marxism, is to be true to the letter and not to the spirit of the teaching, is to repeat by rote the old conclusions without being able to use the Marxian method in order to analyse the new political situation. Then and now—the age of the last bourgeois revolutionary movements, and the age of desperate reaction, of extreme tension of all forces on the eve of the proletarian revolution—are obviously different. *Then* Poland as a whole was revolutionary, not only the peasantry, but even the bulk of the nobility. The tradition of the struggle for national liberation was so strong and deep-rooted that after their defeat at home Poland's best sons went wherever they could find a revolutionary class to support; the memory of Dombrowski and of Wróblewski is inseparably linked with the greatest movement of the proletariat in the nineteenth century, with the last—and let us hope the last unsuccessful—insurrection of the Paris workers. *Then* complete victory for democracy in Europe was indeed impossible without the restoration of Poland. *Then* Poland was indeed the bulwark of civilisation against tsarism; it was the vanguard of democracy. *Now* the Polish ruling classes, the “szlachta”¹ in Germany and in Austria, the industrial and financial magnates in Russia have joined the ruling classes of the countries that oppress Poland—while the German and the Russian proletariat are fighting for their freedom side by side with the Polish proletariat, which has heroically assimilated the great traditions of the old revolutionary Poland. *Now*, the advanced spokesmen of Marxism in the neighbouring country, while attentively watching the political evolution of Europe and strongly sympathising with the heroic struggle of the Poles, nevertheless frankly admit that “St. Petersburg has become a much more important revolutionary centre than Warsaw, and the Russian revolutionary movement possesses today greater international significance than the Polish movement.” This is what Kautsky wrote as early as 1896, when he defended the inclusion

¹ Nobility.—Ed. Eng. ed.

of the demand for the restoration of Poland in the programme of the Polish Social-Democrats. And in 1902 Mehring, having studied the evolution of the Polish question since 1848, arrived at the following conclusion:

"If the Polish proletariat ever decided to inscribe on its banner the restoration of a Polish class state, which the ruling classes themselves do not want to hear about, it would be playing a historical farce; such things have occurred to the propertied classes (as, for instance, the Polish gentry in 1791), but ought never to occur to the working class. If, on the other hand, this reactionary utopia is dragged in for the purpose of drawing to the side of proletarian agitation those groups of the intelligentsia and of the petty bourgeoisie which still respond to some extent to nationalist agitation, then that utopia is doubly to be condemned as the offspring of an unworthy opportunism which would sacrifice the profound interests of the working class for the cheap and paltry successes of the moment.

Those interests categorically demand that in all the three countries that have divided Poland among themselves, the Polish workers should fight unreservedly side by side with their class comrades. The times when a bourgeois revolution could create a free Poland have passed: today the resurrection of Poland is possible only as the consequence of a social revolution, in the course of which the modern proletariat will break its chains."¹

We entirely subscribe to Mehring's conclusions. We shall only remark that the conclusion remains unassailable even if we do not go as far as Mehring in our arguments. Certainly, the present situation in regard to the Polish question is radically different from that which obtained fifty years ago.* But the present situation must not be regarded as permanent. The antagonism of classes has undoubtedly relegated questions of nationality far to the background. But we cannot categorically assert, without running the risk of becoming doctrinaire, that the temporary emergence of the national question on the forefront of the political stage is impossible. Undoubtedly, the restoration of Poland before the fall of capitalism is highly improbable, but we cannot assert that it is absolutely impossible, or that circumstances may not arise under which the Polish bourgeoisie will take the side of independence, etc. And Russian Social-Democracy does not in the least intend to tie its hands. In including the recognition of the right of self-determination in its programme, it takes

¹ The passage quoted is from F. Mehring's preface to the *Works of Marx and Engels* of the period of 1841-50, German ed., 1902.—Ed.

into account *all* possible and even all *imaginable* combinations. That programme does not preclude the Polish proletariat adopting the slogan of a free and independent Polish republic, even though the probability of its becoming a reality before the introduction of socialism is infinitesimal. The programme merely demands that a genuinely socialist party shall not corrupt proletarian consciousness, or slur over the class struggle, or seduce the working class by bourgeois-democratic phrases, or disrupt the unity of the contemporary political struggle of the proletariat. The whole point lies in this reservation, for only with this reservation do we recognise self-determination. It is useless for the P.P.S. to pretend that they differ from the Russian and German Social-Democrats in that the latter reject the right of self-determination, the right to aspire to a free and independent republic. It is not this, but the fact that they forget the class point of view, obscure it by chauvinism and disrupt the unity of the contemporary political struggle, that prevents us from regarding the P.P.S. as a genuine Social-Democratic Labour Party. This, for instance, is the way the P.P.S. usually formulates the question: ". . . We can only *weaken* tsarism by wresting Poland from it, the Russian comrades must *overthrow* it." Or again: ". . . after the overthrow of tsarism we would simply take our fate into our own hands and secede from Russia." See to what monstrous conclusions this monstrous logic leads, even from the point of view of the programme demand for the restoration of Poland. *Because* the restoration of Poland is one of the possible (but by no means unconditionally certain, as long as the bourgeoisie rules) consequences of democratic evolution, *therefore*, the Polish proletariat must not fight together with the Russian proletariat to overthrow tsarism, but "only" to weaken it by wresting Poland from it. *Because* Russian tsarism is concluding a closer and closer alliance with the bourgeoisie and the governments of Germany, Austria, etc., *therefore*, the Polish proletariat must weaken its alliance with the proletariat of Russia, Germany, etc., by whose side it is now fighting against a *common* yoke. This is nothing more nor less than sacrificing the most vital interests of the proletariat for

the bourgeois-democratic interpretation of national independence. The disintegration of Russia, which the P. P. S. desires, *in contrast with* our aim of overthrowing tsarism, is and will remain a hollow phrase as long as economic evolution continues to unite the different parts of a political whole more and more closely and as long as the bourgeoisie of all countries unites more and more against its common enemy, the proletariat, and in support of its common ally, the tsar. But the *dispersion of the forces of the proletariat*, which is now suffering under the yoke of tsarism, is the sad reality, the direct consequence of the error of the P.P.S., the direct result of its admiration for bourgeois-democratic formulæ. In order to avoid seeing the disintegration of the proletariat, the P.P.S. stoops to chauvinism and presents the views of the Russian Social-Democrats in the following way: "We [the Poles] must wait for the socialist revolution, and until that time we must patiently bear national oppression." This is untrue. The Russian Social-Democrats have never advised anything of the sort; on the contrary, they fight, and call upon the whole Russian proletariat to fight, against all manifestations of national oppression in Russia, they include in *their* programme not only complete equality of status for all languages, nationalities, etc., but actually the recognition of the right of every nationality to determine its own destiny. While recognising this right, we *subordinate* our support of the demand for national independence to the interests of the proletarian struggle, and only a chauvinist can interpret our position as expressing the mistrust of a Russian towards a non-Russian: for in reality this position necessarily follows from the mistrust of the class conscious proletarian towards the bourgeoisie. The P.P.S. view is that the problem of nationality is *exhausted* by the contrast—"we" (Poles) and "they" (Germans, Russians, etc.). The Social-Democrat puts in the forefront the contrast—"we," the proletarians, and "they," the bourgeoisie. "We," the proletarians, have seen dozens of times how the bourgeoisie betrays the interests of freedom, country, language and nationality when it is confronted with the revolutionary proletariat. We have seen the French bourgeoisie, at the moment of the greatest hum-

iliation and oppression of the French nation, surrender to the Prussians, we have seen the government of national defence become a government of treason to the people, we have seen the bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation asking for the help of soldiers of the oppressing nation to crush its proletarian countrymen who had dared to stretch out a hand for power.* And this being so, we shall always say to the Polish workers, undeterred by chauvinist and opportunist heckling: only the complete and most intimate alliance with the Russian proletariat can meet the requirements of the political struggle that is now going on against tsarism, only this alliance can assure complete political and economic freedom.

What we have said of the Polish question is wholly applicable to every other national question. The accursed history of tsarism has left us a legacy of tremendous *estrangement* between the working classes of the various nationalities which are oppressed by tsarism. This estrangement is a very great evil, a very great obstacle in the struggle against tsarism, and we must not legalise this evil or sanctify this shameful state of affairs by establishing the "principle" of the separateness of parties or "federation" of parties. It is, of course, simpler and easier to pursue the line of least resistance, and for everyone to make himself comfortable in his corner following the rule, "it is not my business," as the Bund wants to do. The more we realise the necessity for unity, the more firmly we are convinced that a concerted offensive against tsarism is impossible without complete unity, the more obvious the necessity for a centralised organisation of the struggle becomes, as long as the present political system continues—the less inclined are we to be satisfied with an "easy," but specious and, at bottom, profoundly false solution of the problem. As long as the harm of estrangement is not realised, and as long as the desire to put an end radically and at all costs to this mutual estrangement in the camp of the proletarian party is lacking, there is no need for such fig leaves as "federation," nor is it any use undertaking to solve a problem which one of the "sides" really has no desire to

solve; it is better to let the lessons of experience and the real movement convince them that centralism is essential for the success of the struggle of the proletarians of every nationality oppressed by tsarism against tsarism and against the international bourgeoisie, which is becoming more and more united.

July 1903.

DOES THE JEWISH PROLETARIAT NEED AN "INDEPENDENT POLITICAL PARTY"? *

No. 105 of *Posledniye Izvestiya*¹ (January 28 [15], 1903), the organ of the Foreign Committee of the General Jewish Labour League in Lithuania, Poland and Russia, published an article entitled "Concerning a Certain Manifesto" (*viz.*, the manifesto issued by the Ekaterinoslav Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.), containing the following statement, which is as extraordinary as it is significant and, without exaggeration, is "pregnant with consequences": "The Jewish proletariat has formed itself [*sic!*] into an independent [*sic!*] political party, the Bund."

We had not known this. This is something new.

Up to now the Bund has been a constituent part of the R.S.D.L.P., and in No. 106 of *Posledniye Izvestiya* we still (still!) find a statement of the Central Committee of the Bund, bearing the heading "R.S.D.L.P." It is true that at its recent Fourth Congress, the Bund decided to change its name (without stating that it would like to hear the opinion of the Russian comrades on the name a section of the R.S.D.L.P. should bear) and to "introduce" new *federal* relations in the rules of the Russian Party. These relations have now been actually "introduced" by the Foreign Committee of the Bund, if that word can describe the fact that it has retired from the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad and has concluded a federal treaty with the latter.**

On the other hand, when *Iskra* attacked the decisions of the Fourth Congress, the Bund itself stated very definitely that it only wanted to *get its wishes* and its *decisions accepted* by the R.S.D.L.P., in other words, it recognised straightforwardly and categorically that until the R.S.D.L.P. adopted the new rule

¹ *Latest News*,—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

and until the new form of relations with the Bund were settled, the Bund would remain a section of the R.S.D.L.P.

But now, suddenly, we are told that the Jewish proletariat has already *formed itself* into an *independent* political party! We repeat—this is something new.

Equally new is the furious and foolish onslaught of the Foreign Committee of the Bund upon the Ekaterinoslav Committee. We have at last (*though unfortunately after much delay*) received a copy of this manifesto, and we must say without hesitation that in attacking a manifesto *like this*, the Bund has *undoubtedly* taken a serious political step.¹ This step is fully in accord with proclaiming the Bund an independent political party and throws much light on the complexion and behaviour of this new party.

We regret that lack of space prevents us from reprinting the Ekaterinoslav manifesto in full (it would take up about two columns of *Iskra*),² and we must confine ourselves to remarking that this admirable manifesto excellently explains to the Jewish workers of the *city of Ekaterinoslav* (we shall presently explain why we have emphasised these words) the Social-Democratic attitude towards Zionism and anti-Semitism. In doing so the manifesto treats the sentiments, moods and desires of the Jewish workers so considerately—with such comradely consideration—that it specially emphasises the necessity of fighting under the banner of the R.S.D.L.P. “*even for the preservation and further development of your [the manifesto addresses the Jewish workers] national culture,*” “*even from the standpoint of purely national interests*” (underlined and italicised in the manifesto).

In spite of this the F.C. of the Bund (we were on the point of saying the C.C. of the new party) violently attacks the manifesto for *making no mention of the Bund*. That is the only crime the manifesto is guilty of, but a crime that is terrible

¹ That is, of course, if the F.C. of the Bund expresses the views of the “Bund” as a whole on this question.

² We intend to reprint, in full, the manifesto and the attack of the F.C. of the Bund, in a pamphlet which we are preparing for the press.

and unpardonable. On the strength of it the Ekaterinoslav Committee is accused of lacking "political acumen." The Ekaterinoslav comrades are chastised for not "yet having digested the idea of the necessity for a separate organisation [a profound and significant idea!] of the forces [!!] of the Jewish proletariat," for "still fostering the absurd hope of getting rid of it" (the Bund), for spreading the "no less dangerous fable" (no less dangerous than the Zionist fable) that anti-Semitism is connected with the bourgeois strata and with their interests, and not with those of the working class. That is why the Ekaterinoslav Committee is advised to "abandon the harmful habit of hushing up the independent Jewish labour movement" and to "reconcile itself to the fact of the Bund's existence."

Now let us consider whether the Ekaterinoslav Committee has actually committed a crime, and whether it really should have mentioned the Bund. Both questions must be answered in the negative for the simple reason that the manifesto is not addressed to the "Jewish workers" in general (as the F.C.B. falsely stated), but to "the Jewish workers of the *city of Ekaterinoslav*" (the F.C. of the Bund forgot to quote these last words!). *The Bund has no organisation* in Ekaterinoslav (besides, in the case of the South of Russia the Fourth Congress of the Bund passed a resolution *not to organise separate committees of the Bund* in those cities where the Jewish organisations are affiliated to the Party committee and where their needs can be satisfied without their being separated from the committees). Since the Jewish workers in Ekaterinoslav have not been organised under a special committee, it follows that their movement (inseparable from the whole labour movement of that district) is in all respects under the direction of the Ekaterinoslav Committee, which thus *directly* subordinates them to the R.S.D.L.P. which must call upon them to work *for the whole Party*, and not for special sections of it. It is clear that in these circumstances the Ekaterinoslav Committee was not obliged to mention the Bund; on the contrary, if it had presumed to advocate "the necessity for a separate organisation of the forces [it would rather and

more probably have been an organisation of the *impotence*¹ of the Jewish proletariat" (which is what the Bundists want), it would have committed a very bad mistake and a direct breach not only of the Party rules, but of the unity of the proletarian class struggle.

Further, the Ekaterinoslav Committee is accused of being insufficiently "orientated" in the question of anti-Semitism. The F.C. of the Bund displays a perfectly childish understanding of great social movements. The Ekaterinoslav manifesto speaks of the *international* anti-Semitic movement of the *last decades* and remarks that "from Germany this movement spread to other countries and everywhere found adherents precisely among the bourgeoisie, and not among the working class strata of the population." "This is a no less dangerous fable" (than the Zionist fable), the F.C.B. shouts out, quite angrily this time. Anti-Semitism "has struck roots in the mass of the workers," and to prove this the Bund, which is "orientated," cites two facts: 1) the workers took part in the pogrom in Zhenstokhowo; and 2) the behaviour of 12 (twelve!) Christian workers in Zhitomir who scabbed on the strikers and threatened to "rip up all the Yids." Very weighty proof, indeed, especially the latter! The editors of *Posledniye Izvestiya* are so accustomed to operating with great strikes affecting five or ten workers that the action of twelve ignorant workers in Zhitomir is produced as evidence to prove which "strata of the population" are connected with international anti-Semitism. This is, indeed, magnificent! If, instead of flying into a foolish and comic rage at the Ekaterinoslav Committee, the Bundists had pondered over this question and had consulted, let us say, Kautsky's pamphlet on the social revolution, a Yiddish edition of which they themselves recently published,* they would have understood the connection

¹ It is this task of "organising impotence" that the Bund serves when it uses such a phrase as "our comrades of the Christian working class organisations." The phrase is as ridiculous as are all its attacks on the Ekaterinoslav Committee. We have no knowledge of any "Christian" working class organisations. The organisations belonging to the R.S.D.L.P. never distinguished their members according to their religion, never asked them about their religion and *never will*—even when the Bund will in *actual fact* have "formed itself into an independent political party."

that *undoubtedly* exists between anti-Semitism and the interests of the bourgeois and not of the working class strata of the population. If they had pondered a little more they might have realised that the social character of anti-Semitism today is not changed by the fact that dozens or even hundreds of unorganised workers, nine-tenths of whom are utterly ignorant, take part in a pogrom.

The Ekaterinnoslav Committee attacked (and very rightly attacked) the Zionist fable about anti-Semitism being eternal; by making its angry comment the Bund has only confused the question and planted in the minds of the Jewish workers ideas which will serve to *obscure* their class consciousness.

From the point of view of the fight carried on by the working class of Russia for political liberty and for socialism, the Bund's attack on the Ekaterinoslav Committee is the acme of folly. From the point of view of the Bund as "an independent political party," it becomes intelligible; don't dare organise "Jewish" workers with "Christian" workers! Don't dare address the Jewish workers in the name of the R.S.D.L.P. or of its committee directly, "avoiding other departments," avoiding the Bund, without mentioning the Bund!

And this profoundly regrettable fact is not accidental. From the moment you demanded "federation" instead of autonomy in matters concerning the Jewish proletariat you were *compelled* to proclaim the Bund an "independent political party" in order to carry out this principle of federation *at all costs*. But by proclaiming the Bund to be an independent political party you reduce your fundamental error in the question of nationalities to an absurdity in a way which inevitably and necessarily becomes the starting point for a change in the views of the Jewish proletariat and of Jewish Social-Democrats in general. The "autonomy" established under the rules adopted in 1898 gave the Jewish labour movement all it needed: propaganda and agitation in Yiddish, its own literature and congresses, permission to advance special demands in accordance with the common Social-Democratic programme, and the satisfaction of local needs and demands arising out of the peculiarities of Jewish

life. On all other things there must be complete fusion with the Russian proletariat, in the interests of the proletariat of Russia as a whole. As for the fear of being "steam-rolled" in the event of such fusion, the very nature of the case makes it groundless, because autonomy will serve as a guarantee against all "steam-rolling" on all specifically Jewish matters, while on all matters relating to the fight against tsarism, the fight against the bourgeoisie of Russia as a whole, we must act as a single and centralised fighting organisation, we must have behind us the whole of the proletariat, without distinction of language or nationality, a proletariat whose unity is cemented by having constantly to solve problems of theory and practice, of tactics and organisation, in common; we must not set up organisations that would march separately, each along its own track, we must not weaken our offensive by breaking up into a number of independent political parties, we must not breed estrangement and isolation and then have to cure, with the aid of those famous "federation" plasters, an artificially inoculated disease.

February 1903.

PART II

THE SECOND CONGRESS AND THE SPLIT IN THE R. S. D. L. P.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE R. S. D. L. P.*

*This account is intended exclusively for personal friends, so that reading it without the permission of the author (Lenin) is equivalent to reading private letters.***

To enable the reader to understand what follows, I shall first of all state who was present at the Congress, although this will be anticipating somewhat. The delegates at the Congress had fifty-one decisive votes (thirty-three with one vote each and nine with two each, that is, nine "double votes"). In addition, there were ten delegates with consultative votes, if I am not mistaken. This makes a total of fifty-two delegates. The political grouping of the votes, as was shown during the *whole* course of the Congress, was as follows: decisive votes—five Bundists, three *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists (two from the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad and one from the St. Petersburg League of Struggle***), four *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists**** (two from the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group and two from the Kharkov Committee which was entirely at one with *Yuzhny Rabochy*), six irresolute waverers (the "Marsh" as the *Iskra*-ists called them, jokingly, of course), and about thirty-three *Iskra*-ists more or less firm and consistent in their *Iskra*-ism. These thirty-three *Iskra*-ists, when they remained united, always decided the outcome of every issue at the Congress, but they split into two sub-groups, the final split taking place only towards the end of the Congress. One sub-group, about nine votes—the *Iskra*-ists of the "soft," or more correctly, the "zigzag" line (or feminine line, as some wits put it, not without reason), *Iskra*-ists who (as will appear further on) were in favour of fair play, of a resultant . . . etc.—and about twenty-four votes of *Iskra*-ists of the firm line who ad-

vocated consistent *Iskra*-ism in tactics and in the personnel of the central institutions of the Party.

I repeat, this group only assumed final shape and became fully apparent *post factum*, towards the end of the Congress (which held forty sessions!), and I am anticipating in outlining this group at the outset. I must also make the reservation that this grouping gives only the *approximate* number of votes cast because on certain minor issues (and on one occasion—in the case of “equal status of languages,” of which more later—on a major issue) the votes were dispersed, there were abstentions, the groups got mixed up, etc.

The composition of the Congress had been determined beforehand by the Organisation Committee * which, according to the standing orders of the Congress,** was entitled to invite to the Congress whomever it thought fit, with a consultative vote. As soon as the Congress met it elected a credentials commission, and all business concerning the personnel of the Congress was handed over to this commission.*** (Parenthetically, the commission included a Bundist who tried to wear out all the members of the commission by keeping them up till 3 a.m. and still “reserving his opinion” *on every issue*.)

The Congress began with all the *Iskra* people working in peace and harmony; of course there were always different shades of opinion among them, but these shades did not come out on the surface as political dissensions. Incidentally, let us point out at once that the split among the *Iskra*-ists was one of the principal political results of the Congress, and whoever wishes to become familiar with the subject must pay particular attention to all the episodes that were connected, however remotely, with this split.

A rather important act at the very beginning of the Congress was the election of a *bureau* or *presidium*. Martov was in favour of electing nine persons who would appoint a bureau of three for every session; he wanted these nine to include even a Bundist. I was in favour of electing not more than three for the duration of the Congress, three people who would be able to keep the Congress “in hand.” The three elected were: Plekhanov,

myself and Comrade T (an *Iskra*-ist of the firm line and a member of the O. C.,¹ we shall have to mention him often in what follows). The last named, however, only obtained a small majority over a member of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group (who was also a member of the O.C.). The disagreement between Martov and me about the bureau (a disagreement which is significant in the light of what follows) did not, however, result in any split or conflict: in one way or another the matter was settled peacefully, "as between friends," as matters were usually settled in the *Iskra* organisation and on the editorial board of *Iskra*.

A meeting (secret, and informal, of course) of the *Iskra* organisation concerning its mandates at the Congress was also held at the beginning of the Congress. This, too, resulted in a peaceful, "amicable" settlement. The only reason I draw attention to this meeting is because I think it is characteristic, first, that at the beginning of the Congress the *Iskra*-ists worked in harmony, and, secondly, that they decided to appeal to the authority of the *Iskra* organisation (or, more precisely, to the members of the *Iskra* organisation present at the Congress) in doubtful and controversial cases; of course, the decisions of these meetings were not binding, since the rule was: "imperative mandates are abolished"—everyone may and must vote at the Congress in accordance with his free personal conviction, without submitting to any organisation whatever—this rule, I say, was recognised by all the *Iskra*-ists, and was proclaimed by the chairman at the opening of nearly every one of the *Iskra* meetings.

To proceed. The first incident at the Congress which revealed the fact that all was not well among the *Iskra*-ists, and which became the starting point of the final drama (or tragi-comedy?), was the notorious "*O.C. incident.*" This incident must be dealt with in some detail: it happened at the stage when the Congress was still busy constituting itself, when the standing orders of the Congress were still under discussion (a business which, by the way, took up a tremendous amount of time because of the

¹ Organisation Committee.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

obstruction of the Bundists who intentionally or unintentionally lost no opportunity . . . of holding it up whenever and whichever way they could). The substance of the O.C. incident was this: before the Congress met, the O.C. had turned down the protest of *Borba** (the *Borba* group), which demanded that it be admitted to the Congress, and supported this decision on the credentials commission; but *at the Congress* this very O.C. suddenly announced that it was going to invite Ryazanov with a consultative vote. This is how the incident occurred:

Before the sessions of the Congress had begun Martov had confidentially told me that a member of the *Iskra* organisation, who was also a member of the O.C. (let us call him N), had decided to insist in the O.C. on inviting, with a consultative vote, a person¹ whom Martov himself could only describe as a "turncoat." (That person had indeed gravitated towards *Iskra* at one time, only to desert a few weeks later to *Rabocheye Dyelo*, although the latter at that time was in a state of utter decay.) Martov and I discussed the matter; both of us were indignant that a member of the *Iskra* organisation should have done such a thing without deeming it necessary to consult the organisation, although fully aware, of course (for Martov had warned Comrade N), that his behaviour was a slap in the face for *Iskra*. N actually introduced his motion in the O.C., but it was turned down owing to the indignant protest of Comrade T who gave a full description of the political fickleness of this "turncoat." It is significant that even then Martov, in spite of his former excellent personal relations, said he was incapable of remaining on speaking terms with N, so astounded was he by the latter's behaviour. N's desire to put spokes in the wheel of *Iskra* also found expression in the O.C. passing, with his support, a vote of censure on the editorial board of *Iskra*²; the censure, it is true, referred to a very minor case; nevertheless, it roused Martov to very great indignation. Reports from Russia, which were also conveyed to me by Martov, indicated that N had displayed

¹ Y. M. Steklov.—*Ed.*

² For a more detailed account of this incident see Lenin's "Report to the Congress of the League," in the present volume,—*Ed.*

a tendency to spread rumours about dissensions between the *Iskra*-ists in Russia and those abroad. All this tended to make the *Iskra*-ists very suspicious of N, and on top of all this the following incident occurred. The O.C. had turned down the protest of *Borba*; the members of the O.C. (T and N) were called before the credentials commission and both (*including N!!!*) pronounced themselves very decidedly against *Borba*. In spite of this the O.C. met unexpectedly, right by "the window," during an interval in the morning session of the Congress, and decided to invite Ryazanov with a consultative vote! *N was in favour of inviting him*. T, of course, was opposed, and declared that after the question of the composition of the Congress had been submitted to a special credentials commission elected by the Congress, the decisions of the O.C. were *ultra vires*. The *Yuzhny Rabochy* members of the O.C., plus the Bundist, plus N, of course, outvoted Comrade T and the motion was passed in the O.C.

T informed the editorial board of *Iskra*, which, of course, unanimously decided (not all were present, but Martov and Zasulich were) to challenge the O.C. at the Congress, for many *Iskra*-ists had publicly pronounced themselves against *Borba* at the Congress, and retreat on the issue was impossible.

When (in the afternoon session) the O.C. announced its decision to the Congress, T entered his protest. The *Yuzhny Rabochy member*¹ of the O.C. furiously attacked T, accusing him of committing a breach of discipline (!) because the O.C. had decided not to divulge this at the Congress (*sic!*). Naturally, we (Plekhanov, Martov and I) came down on the O.C. with all our might and accused it of reviving imperative mandates, of infringing upon the sovereignty of the Congress, etc. The Congress took our side, the O.C. was defeated, and a resolution was passed depriving the O.C., as a body, of the right to modify the composition of the Congress.

Such was the "O.C. incident." In the first place it finally undermined, in the minds of many *Iskra*-ists, all political confidence in N (while strengthening their confidence in T); in the second place, it not only *proved*, but graphically *showed* how

¹E. Y. Levin.—*Ed.*

shaky the *Iskra*-ist line of policy was, even in a central institution like the O.C. which was supposed to be one hundred per cent *Iskra*-ist. It became clear that the O.C. consisted, besides a Bundist, of: 1) the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists with a policy of their own; 2) "*Iskra*-ists who were ashamed of being *Iskra*-ists"¹; and only a section 3) of *Iskra*-ists who were not ashamed of being such.² When the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists expressed the desire to discuss the regrettable incident with the editorial board of *Iskra* (in private, of course)—*Comrade N*, it is important to note this, expressed no desire to do so at the time—the editorial board did discuss the matter with the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists, and I plainly told them that the Congress had revealed the important political fact that the Party contained many *Iskra*-ists who were ashamed of being *Iskra*-ists and capable, just to spite *Iskra*, of playing a trick like inviting Ryazanov. I was so indignant at the trick N had played after he had spoken in the commission against *Borba* that I said publicly, at the Congress: "Comrades who have attended foreign congresses know what a storm of indignation is always raised against those who say one thing in committee and another thing on the floor of the Congress." An *Iskra*-ist who was afraid of being "reproached" by the Bundists with being the "nominee of *Iskra*," and who for no other reason played political tricks on *Iskra*, was incapable, of course, of inspiring any confidence.

The general mistrust the *Iskra*-ists entertained towards N increased to a tremendous degree when Martov's attempt to discuss the matter with N resulted in N's announcement that he had resigned from the "*Iskra*" organisation!! From that moment N's "case" was taken up by the *Iskra* organisation, the members of which were indignant at this manner of resigning; the organisation met four times to discuss the question. These meetings, especially the last of them, were exceedingly important, because it was at these meetings that the split among the *Iskra*-ists took shape, mainly on the issue of the composition of the C.C.

But before I go on to relate what occurred at these meetings

¹ E. M. Alexandrova.—Ed.

² P. A. Krassikov.—Ed.

(private and informal, I must repeat) of the *Iskra* organisation, I shall say something about the work of the Congress. The work had been proceeding harmoniously in the sense that all the *Iskra*-ists acted in unanimity on the first point of the agenda (the place of the Bund in the Party), on the second point (programme) and on the third point (the establishment of a C.O.¹ of the Party). Agreement within the *Iskra* camp ensured a considerable, united majority at the Congress (a compact majority, as the Bundists put it regretfully!) although the "irresolute" ("Marsh") and the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists often showed their true colours on minor points by their complete lack of stability. It became more and more evident that the not quite *Iskra* elements of the Congress had formed a political group.

Let me return to the meetings of the *Iskra* organisation. At the first meeting it was decided to ask N for an explanation, leaving it to him to choose the members of the *Iskra* organisation to whom he would like to make this explanation. I protested point blank against putting the question in this way and demanded that the political issue (the *Iskra*-ists' lack of political confidence in N at the present Congress) should be kept distinct from the personal issue (to appoint a commission to enquire into the reasons for N's strange behaviour). At the second meeting it was reported that N did not wish to give explanations in the presence of T, although he did not intend to say anything about T personally. I protested again, refusing to associate myself with a procedure which permitted someone who was not a member of the organisation to remove, be it only for a second, a member who was not to be the subject of the discussion. I regarded this as an unworthy game and a slap in the face for the organisation on the part of N: N did not have sufficient confidence in the organisation to allow it to determine the conditions under which the explanation was to be given! It was at the third meeting that N gave his explanation, which, however, *failed to satisfy* the majority of those present. At the fourth meeting all the *Iskra*-ists were present, but that meeting was *preceded* by a number of important episodes at the Congress.

¹ Central Organ, i.e., the Party paper.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

In the first place it is worth mentioning the episode that occurred in connection with the "equal status of languages." The subject under discussion was the programme, and the formulation of the demand for the equality and equal status of languages.* (Each point of the programme was discussed and passed separately, the Bundists carrying on a *desperate* obstruction, so that almost two-thirds of the time of the Congress was taken up by the discussion of the programme!) The Bundists succeeded in causing the ranks of the *Iskra*-ists to waver and induced some of them to believe that *Iskra* was opposed to the "equal status of languages"—while in reality the editorial board of *Iskra* was merely opposed to a formula which it believed to be illiterate, absurd and superfluous. The fight was a heated one, the Congress divided *equally*, into *two equal halves* (a few abstained from voting): *Iskra* (and the editorial board of *Iskra*) had on its side 23 votes (or perhaps 23 to 25; I do not remember the exact figure) and as many against it. The discussion then had to be postponed, and the question referred to a committee. The committee arrived at a formula which was adopted by the Congress *unanimously*. The incident in connection with the equal status of languages is important because it again revealed the instability of *Iskra*-ism, it finally revealed the instability of the irresolute (if I am not mistaken it was on this occasion, and by the *Iskra*-ists of the Martov persuasion, that they were christened the "Marsh"!) and of the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists who were all against *Iskra*. Passion ran high and *harsh* words were hurled *without number* at the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists by the *Iskra*-ists, *especially by the Martovists*. During the interval, one of the "leaders"¹ of the Martovists almost came to blows with the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists and I hastened to re-open the session (on the insistence of Plekhanov, who feared there would be a fight). It is important to note that even among these twenty-three staunch *Iskra*-ists, the Martovists (*i.e.*, the *Iskra*-ists who afterwards followed Martov) were *in the minority*.

The other episode was the fight about point 1 of the "rules of the Party." This was the fifth item on the *Tagesordnung*** and

¹ L. D. Trotsky.—*Ed*,

came up towards the end of the Congress. The following had been passed: item 1—resolution against federalism*; item 2—the programme; item 3—the recognition of *Iskra* as the central organ of the Party¹; item 4—the “delegates’ reports” were heard, or rather some of them, the rest being referred to a committee, for it became apparent that the Congress had no time left (both the funds and the people having been exhausted).

Point 1 of the rules defined what was meant by the term, member of the Party. The definition I proposed in my draft was as follows: “A member of the R.S.D.L.P. is one who recognises its programme and supports the Party materially as well as *by personal participation in one of the organisations of the Party.*” Martov, on the other hand, moved to substitute for the words underlined the words: *working under the control and guidance of one of the organisations of the Party.* My formula was supported by Plekhanov, Martov’s was supported by the other members of the editorial board. (Axelrod spoke for them at the Congress.) We insisted that membership of the Party must be given a narrow definition so as to distinguish those who worked from those who talked, so as to get rid of chaos in the matter of organisation, to get rid of the monstrosity and absurdity of having organisations which consisted of members of the Party, but which were not Party organisations, etc. Martov was in favour of *widening* the Party and spoke of a

¹ It is very important to bear in mind that the *Tagesordnung* [agenda—*Ed.*] of the Congress adopted on my report to the O.C. and *approved by the Congress* included as two separate items: 3) “the establishment of a central organ of the Party, or the endorsement of such,” and 24) “elections to the central institutions of the Party.” When one of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists asked on item 3 what we were endorsing, was it the title? for we did not yet know who the editors would be!—*Martov* took the floor and explained that we were endorsing the *policy of Iskra*, irrespective of persons, that this did not prejudice the question of who was to be included in the editorial board, for the elections to the central institutions would take place under item 24, and all imperative mandates had been abolished.

This utterance of Martov’s (on item 3, *before the split* among the *Iskra*-ists) is exceedingly significant.

The explanation given by Martov was entirely in accord with the way we *all* interpreted items 3 and 24 of the *Tagesordnung*.

After item 3, Martov in his speeches more than once used the phrase: *ex-members* of the editorial board of *Iskra*,

broad class movement which demanded a broad—a diffuse—organisation, etc. It is odd that in defending their views nearly all the supporters of Martov referred to *What Is To Be Done?*. Plekhanov vehemently opposed Martov and pointed out that the Jaurès-ist wording proposed by the latter opened the door for opportunists who wanted nothing better than to be in the Party without belonging to an organisation. I maintained that “under the control and guidance” actually meant nothing more nor less than *absence of any control and guidance*. Martov won the point; his formula was adopted (by a majority of 28 against 23, or something like that, I do not remember exactly) *thanks* to the Bundists, who, of course, saw the loophole at once, and gave all their five votes to secure the “greater evil” (these were the very words uttered by one of the *Rabocheye Dyelo* delegates in giving his reasons for voting for Martov!*). The heated dispute around point 1 of the rules and the voting on it served once more to bring out the political grouping at the Congress, and strikingly revealed that the Bund and *Rabocheye Dyelo* were in a position to *decide the fate* of every resolution by supporting the minority of the *Iskra*-ists against the majority.

The *last* (fourth) meeting of the *Iskra* organisation took place *after* the dispute and the voting on point 1 of the rules. By now the dissensions among the *Iskra*-ists over the question of who was to be included in the C.C.¹ had become fully apparent, and led to a split in their ranks: a part was in favour of an *Iskra*-ist C.C. (in view of the dissolution of the *Iskra* organisation and of the Emancipation of Labour group and the necessity of completing *Iskra's* work), the other part was in favour of letting the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists in and of allowing the *Iskra*-ists of the “zigzag line” to predominate. Some were absolutely opposed to N's candidature, others were in favour of it. It was to make one last attempt to come to an agreement that the *meeting of sixteen* (members of the *Iskra* organisation, the consultative votes, too, being counted, as I have already said) was called. The voting gave the following results: nine votes against N, four in favour, the rest abstaining. After that the majority

¹ Central Committee.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

who, in spite of everything, wished to avoid war with the minority, proposed a conciliatory list of five persons including one *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ist (favoured by the minority) and one militant member of the minority. The others proposed were consistent *Iskra*-ists (one of whom—this is important—took no part in the squabble at the Congress except towards the very end, and was virtually unbiassed, while the other two took no part whatever in the squabbles and were quite unbiassed as far as personalities were concerned). Ten hands were raised for this list (one more was added afterwards, making eleven), and only one against (Martov alone!), the rest abstained! Thus, the conciliatory list was defeated by *Martov*. After that two other "militant" lists, one from each side, were put to the vote, but both were defeated.*

Thus, at the last meeting of the *Iskra* organisation the Martovists were left in a minority on both issues, and in spite of this, when one of the majority (unbiassed, the chairman¹) approached them after the meeting to make a last attempt at conciliation, they declared war.

The calculation of the Martovists was clear and sound; the Bundists and the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists were certain to support the list of the zigzag line, because after a month of the Congress every issue was so clear, every personality stood out so plainly, that not a single member of the Congress could have any difficulty in choosing which was to be preferred or which of the evils was the lesser one. And, of course, for the Bund and *Rabocheye Dyelo*, the zigzag *Iskra*-ists were always the lesser evil, and will always be such.

After the meeting of the sixteen, when the *Iskra*-ists had finally split, and war had been declared between the two sides, the two parties into which the Congress had split began to hold meetings, i.e., private, unofficial gatherings of all those who held the same views. At first the number of *Iskra*-ists of the consistent line to meet together was nine (nine out of sixteen), afterwards fifteen, afterwards twenty-four, if we count *decisive votes* and not individuals. This rapid increase is accounted for by the

¹ V. A. Noskov (Glebov).—Ed.

fact that the lists of candidates for the C.C. were already being circulated and the Martovist list utterly repelled the great majority of the *Iskra*-ists by its flabbiness: the candidates proposed by Martov had all made a very bad impression at the Congress (wriggling, lack of character, tactlessness, etc.). That was the first point; the second point was that the explanation given to the *Iskra*-ists of what took place in the *Iskra* organisation in a great number of cases brought them over to the side of the majority, while Martov's inability to maintain a definite political line became apparent to all. Consequently, twenty-four votes were easily and quickly united in consistent *Iskra*-ist tactics—on a list of candidates for the C.C. and on the election of the three editors (instead of endorsing the old, unworkable and diffuse group of six).

In the meantime the Congress had finished the discussion of the rules, Martov and Co. having once more (and not only once but several times) *beaten* the *Iskra*-ist majority with *the honourable support of the Bund* and "*Rabocheye Dyelo*," as for instance on the question of co-opting members for the centres* (the Congress settled the question *in the Martov spirit*).

Although vitiated in this way, the rules as a whole received the votes of all the *Iskra*-ists and of the whole Congress. But after the general rules had been adopted we passed to the rules of the Bund, and the Congress by an *overwhelming* majority rejected the proposal of the Bund (that the Bund be recognised as the *sole* representative of the Jewish proletariat in the Party). The Bund found itself, I believe, nearly alone against the whole Congress. *The Bundists then left the Congress and declared their secession from the Party.* The Martovists lost five trusty allies! The *Rabocheye Dyelo* delegates also withdrew** after the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad had been recognised as the *only* Party organisation abroad.*** The Martovists lost two more trusty allies! The Congress was left with 44 (51—7) decisive votes, and the consistent *Iskra*-ists became the *majority* (24); the coalition of the Martovists, the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists and the "Marsh" could now muster only 20 votes.

The zigzag-line *Iskra*-ists could do nothing but submit, since the *Iskra*-ists of the firm line had submitted without a murmur when Martov, by forming a coalition with the Bund, had *beaten* and defeated them. But the Martovists had gone so far that instead of submitting they preferred a row and a split.

The row came when the question of endorsing the old editorial board was raised, for a statement on the part of one of the editors was enough to compel the Congress to examine the whole question of the personnel of the C.O. and not to restrict itself merely to endorsing it. The *refusal* to elect the C.O. and the C.C. was a step towards the split.

First about the election of the editorial board. As I have said, item 24 of the *Tagesordnung* was: *elections to the central institutions of the Party*. In my comments on the *Tagesordnung* (these comments were known to *all the "Iskra"-ists long before the Congress*, and to *all the delegates at the Congress*), there was the following marginal note: *election of three persons to the C.O. and three to the C.C.* Consequently, it is beyond all doubt that the demand for the election of three came from the editorial board itself, and *no* member of that board had opposed it. Even Martov and another Martovist leader¹ had advocated these "two groups of three" to a *number of delegates* before the opening of the Congress.

I, personally, several weeks before the Congress, had told Starover and Martov that at the Congress I would demand the election of the editorial board; I agreed to the election of two groups of three, on the understanding that the editorial group might *either* co-opt seven (or more) people *or* remain as it was. (I made a special reservation about the latter alternative.) Starover had even said in so many words that the three meant: Plekhanov+Martov+Lenin, and I *agreed* with him—so clear had it always been to everyone that only people like these could be elected to conduct the paper. Only he who had become embittered, offended and who had lost his head in the struggle at the Congress could *post factum* attack the expediency and workability of such a group of three. The old group of six was

¹ L. D. Trotsky.—Ed.

so unworkable that it had not met in full *once in the course of* three years; this seems incredible, but it is a fact. *Not one of* the forty-five issues of *Iskra* was made up (in the editorial-technical sense) by anyone but Martov or Lenin. And *not once* was a *big* theoretical question raised by anyone but Plekhanov. Axelrod did no work at all (0 = no articles in *Zarya* and three or four in all the forty-five issues of *Iskra*). Zasulich and Starover confined themselves to contributing articles and giving advice, but they *never* did any editorial work in the strict sense of the word. After a month's work of the Congress, the persons who ought to be elected to be *political leaders*, to the centre—was as clear as daylight to every member of the Congress.

To bring before the Congress a proposal to endorse the old editorial board was *absurd, provocative, and could only lead to a row.*

Absurd because it was aimless. Even if the six were endorsed, one of them (myself, for instance) would have demanded that the board be overhauled, that the mutual relations between its members be investigated, and the Congress would have been obliged to begin all over again.

It was provocative and could only lead to a row because *a refusal to endorse* could only be interpreted *as an affront*, while a new election implied no offence whatever. If the C.C. could be elected, why not the C.O.? Since no one proposed that the O.C. be endorsed—there should have been no talk of endorsing the old editorial board.

But, of course, *by demanding* that the old editorial board be endorsed, the Martovists *provoked* the Congress to protest; the protest was received *as an affront*, as an insult, an intention to *kick out*, to oust. . . .

The editors left the Congress hall when the question of electing or endorsing was being discussed. After a furious and heated debate the Congress resolved: *that the old editorial board be not endorsed.*¹

¹ One of the Martovists spoke on this occasion in *such* a way that when he had finished, a delegate shouted to the secretary: "Put a tear instead of a period at the end of his speech in the minutes!" It was the inhabitants of the "Marsh" who most heatedly supported the old editorial board.

It was only after this resolution was passed that the ex-members of the editorial board returned to the meeting room. Martov then rose and, in *his own name* and in that of his colleagues, declined election, with a lot of bloodcurdling stuff about "a state of siege in the Party" (for Ministers who had failed to secure election?) and about "exceptional laws against individuals and groups" (for the sort of individual who, speaking in the name of *Iskra*, tried to smuggle Ryazanov into the Congress, and who said one thing in committee and another at the Congress?).

I replied to him and pointed to the *incredible confusion of political conceptions* which had led to the protest against elections and against the Congress overhauling the boards of officials of the Party.

The ballot resulted in the election of Plekhanov, Martov and Lenin; but Martov *again declined*. Koltsov (who received three votes) also declined. The Congress then passed a resolution authorising the two members of the editorial board of the C.O. to co-opt a third, *if they found a suitable person*.

After that, three members were elected to the C.C., the teller¹ *announcing the name of only one of them to the Congress*; a fifth member² was elected to the Council of the Party (by secret ballot).

The Martovists, followed by the whole of the "Marsh," *did not hand in their ballot papers*, but handed in a written statement to the bureau.

This was an obvious step towards a split, towards *wrecking the Congress*, towards refusing to recognise the Party. But when one of the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists³ stated in so many words that he *doubted (sic!)* the legality of the decisions of the Congress, Martov felt ashamed and repudiated him *by publicly stating that he entertained no doubt as to the legality of the decisions*.

Unfortunately, the acts and behaviour of Martov (and of the Martovists) were not in accord with his fine and loyal words....

¹ V. A. Noskov.—*Ed.*

² G. V. Plekhanov.—*Ed.*

³ V. N. Rozanov.—*Ed.*

After that, the Congress referred the question of publishing the minutes to a "minutes committee" and passed eleven resolutions on tactical questions, *viz.*, 1) on demonstrations; 2) on the trade union movement; 3) on work among the dissenters; 4) on work among the students; 5) on the line of conduct to be pursued under police examination; 6) on shop stewards; 7) on the International Congress of 1904 in Amsterdam; 8) on the liberals (moved by Starover); 9) on the liberals (moved by Plekhanov); 10) on the Socialist-Revolutionaries; 11) on Party literature.

Then, after a short speech by the chairman who impressed upon everyone the binding character of the decisions of the Congress, the Congress was closed.

* * *

Reviewing the behaviour of the Martovists after the Congress, their refusal to work on the C.O. (*which the editorial board had officially asked them to do*), their refusal to work for the C.C., their propaganda of a boycott*—the only thing I can say is that it was a senseless attempt, unworthy of Party members, to disrupt the unity of the Party, and why? *Only* because they were dissatisfied with the composition of the central institutions, for, *objectively speaking*, this was the *only* point on which we disagreed; the subjective judgments (such as affront, insult, kicking-out, elimination, besmirching, etc., etc.) *were the fruits of offended dignity and a morbid imagination.*

This morbid imagination and offended dignity lead directly to the most disgraceful *scandalmongering*. *Before anything is known or seen of the conduct of the new centres* rumours are circulated to the effect that they are "unworkable," rumours about the "spiked gloves" of Ivan Ivanovich or the "fist" of Ivan Nikiforovich,¹ and so on.

To try to prove the "unworkability" of the centres *by boycotting them* is an unprecedented and unheard-of breach of *Party duty*, and no sophistry can conceal this: *the boycott is a step towards breaking up the Party.*

¹ Two characters in Gogol's *The Story of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarrelled with Ivan Nikiforovich*.—Ed.

Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a difficult final period of transition from the circle state to the *Party state*, from philistinism to the *appreciation of revolutionary duty*, from action by scandal and circle pressure to *discipline*.

Whoever values Party work and *action* in the interests of the Social-Democratic labour movement will not stoop to such pitiful sophistry as the "justified" and "loyal" boycott of the centres, nor allow the cause to suffer, nor the work to be held up because of the discontent of a dozen individuals who resent the fact that the people elected to the centres were not the people they wanted to be elected, nor will he allow the officials of the Party to be influenced privately and secretly by means of threats of non-collaboration, by means of boycott, by means of cutting off funds,* by means of scandals and lying tales.

September 1903.

SPEECHES DELIVERED AT THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE R. S. D. L. P.*

A. REPORT ON THE PARTY RULES

LENIN (reporter **) explains the draft rules proposed by him. The fundamental idea of the rules is the division of *functions*. Thus, to take an example, the division into two centres is not the result of the separation of these centres geographically (Russia and abroad), but the logical consequence of the division of functions. The Central Committee performs the function of practical leadership, the central organ, that of ideological leadership. To unify the activity of these two centres, to avoid their acting at cross purposes and, partly, in order to settle disputes, a Council is necessary, which must not bear the character of a purely arbitration body. The clauses in the rules governing the relations between the Central Committee and the local committees, and defining the sphere of jurisdiction of the Central Committee, cannot and should not enumerate all the points over which the Central Committee has jurisdiction. An enumeration is impossible and inconvenient because it is impossible to foresee all cases, and, moreover, points not mentioned would appear to be beyond the jurisdiction of the Central Committee. The Central Committee should be allowed to determine its sphere of jurisdiction, because every local matter may affect the interests of the whole Party, and the Central Committee must be able to intervene in local affairs, against local interests perhaps, but in the interests of the Party as a whole.

Speech delivered August 11 (July 29), 1903.

B. SPEECH DURING THE DISCUSSION OF THE PARTY RULES ***

LENIN: I should like first of all to make two remarks of a personal character. First, on the subject of Axelrod's kindly

proposal (I am not speaking ironically) to "strike a bargain."* I would willingly respond to this appeal, because I do not consider our differences to be so vital as to be a matter of life or death to the Party. We certainly will not perish because of a bad clause in the rules! But since it has come to the point of choosing between *two* formulæ, I simply cannot abandon my firm conviction that Martov's formula is *worse* than the original draft and *may* in certain conditions cause considerable harm to the Party.**

The second remark concerns Comrade Brooker. Naturally, desiring as he does to apply the elective principle everywhere, Comrade Brooker accepted my formula as the only one which defines what is meant by a member of the Party at all exactly. I fail, therefore, to understand Comrade Martov's satisfaction at Comrade Brooker's agreement with me. Is Comrade Martov really *guided* by the very opposite of what Brooker says, without considering the motives and arguments? Coming now to the subject under discussion, I must say that Comrade Trotsky has completely misunderstood the fundamental idea advanced by Comrade Plekhanov,*** and, therefore, in his observations, has evaded the very essence of the question. He spoke of intellectuals and workers, of the class point of view and of the mass movement, but he failed to observe one of the basic questions: does my formula restrict or broaden the term, member of the Party? Had he asked himself this question, he would easily have seen that my formula restricts this conception, while Martov's broadens it, for (to use Martov's own correct expression) it is distinguished for its "elasticity." And in the period of Party life that we are now passing through, this very "elasticity" undoubtedly opens the door for all elements of confusion, vacillation and opportunism. To refute this simple and obvious argument you have to prove that there are no such elements; but Comrade Trotsky did not dream of doing that. Nor can it be proved, because everyone knows that there are not a few such elements, and that they exist even among the working class. It is necessary to safeguard the firmness of our line and the purity of the Party's principles now more than at any other

time, because with its unity restored the Party will accept into its ranks very many unstable elements, the number of which will grow as the Party grows. Comrade Trotsky completely misinterpreted the main idea of my book *What Is To Be Done?* when he said that the Party is not a conspirative organisation (many others raised this objection). He forgot that in my book I propose a number of types of organisations, from the most secret and most exclusive to comparatively broad and "free" (*lose*) organisations. He forgot that the Party must be only the vanguard, the leader of the vast masses of the working class, the whole (or nearly the whole) of which works "under the control and guidance" of the Party organisations, but which does not and should not, as a whole, join the "Party." Now see what conclusions Comrade Trotsky arrives at in consequence of his main mistake. He told us here that if line after line of workers were arrested, and all the workers declared that they did not belong to the Party, our Party would appear to be a strange one! Is it not the other way round? Is not Comrade Trotsky's argument a strange one? He regards as sad what a revolutionary of any experience at all would only rejoice at. If hundreds and thousands of workers who had been arrested for taking part in strikes and demonstrations were not found to be members of Party organisations, it would only prove that we have good organisations, and that we are fulfilling our task of keeping a more or less limited circle of leaders secret and of drawing the broadest possible masses into action. The root of the mistakes made by those who stand for Martov's formula lies in that they not only ignore one of the main evils of our Party life, but even sanctify it. That evil lies in the fact that in an atmosphere of almost universal political discontent, in conditions which require complete secrecy in our work, in conditions which require the concentration of the greater part of our activities in narrow, underground circles and even meetings with individual persons, it is extremely difficult and almost impossible for us to distinguish talkers from workers. And there is hardly another country in the world in which the confusion of these two categories is as common, causes such boundless confusion

and does so much damage as in Russia. We suffer severely from the presence of this evil, not only among the intelligentsia, but also in the ranks of the working class, and Comrade Martov's formula legitimatises it. This formula necessarily strives to make *all and sundry* members of the Party! Comrade Martov himself was forced to admit this with a reservation: "if you like, yes," he said. But this is precisely what we don't like! This is precisely why we are so determined in our opposition to Martov's formula. It is better that ten who actually work should not call themselves members of the Party (real workers don't hunt for titles!) than that one talker should have the right and opportunity to be a Party member. This is a principle which seems to me to be indisputable, and which compels me to fight Martov. I have been told that we give no rights to Party members, and that, therefore, there can be no abuses. Such an argument is quite unsound. In the first place, although we do not state what particular rights a Party member acquires, I want you to note that we do not state that there is to be any restriction of Party members' rights. Secondly—and this is the main point—even apart from rights, we must not forget that every Party member is responsible for the Party, and that *the Party is responsible for every one of its members*. In the conditions in which we have to carry on our political activities, in the present rudimentary state of political organisation, it would be simply dangerous and harmful to give those who are not members of the organisation the rights of members, and to make the Party responsible for people who do not belong to an organisation (and perhaps deliberately refrain from joining). Comrade Martov was horrified at the idea that a person on trial who is not a member of a Party organisation will have no right, in spite of his energetic activity, to call himself a member of our Party. This does not frighten me. On the contrary, serious damage would be done if a person who called himself a Party member without belonging to any of the Party organisations behaved unsatisfactorily in court. It will be impossible to deny that such a person was working under the control and guidance of our organisation—impossible because of the very vagueness

of the term. Actually, there can be no doubt about this—the words “under the control and guidance” will mean that *there will be neither control nor guidance*. The Central Committee will never be in a position to exercise real control over all those who work for, but do not belong to, our organisation. Our task is to place *effective* control in the hands of the Central Committee. Our task is to safeguard the consistency, the steadfastness, the purity of our Party. We must strive to raise the calling and the significance of a Party member higher, higher and still higher—and that is why I am opposed to Martov’s formula.

Speech delivered August 15 (2), 1903.

C. SPEECH ON THE ELECTION OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF “ISKRA” *

I ASK the Congress to permit me to reply to Martov.¹

Comrade Martov said that the vote just taken cast a slur on his political reputation. The elections had nothing to do with casting slurs on political reputations. (*Cries of: “not true, that’s wrong!” Plekhanov and Lenin protest against the interruptions. Lenin asks the secretaries to enter in the minutes that Comrades Zasulich, Martov and Trotsky interrupted him, and that the number of interruptions be recorded.*) To adopt this view means denying the right of the Congress to make new elections, to make any alteration in the composition of its official bodies, to reshuffle the bodies it has set up. The Organisation Committee serves to illustrate the confusion that is created by such an attitude. The Congress expressed complete confidence in and gratitude to the Organisation Committee, but we ridiculed the very suggestion that the Congress has no right to examine the relations existing in the O.C., we rejected every supposition that the O.C., as formerly constituted, would hinder the “uncomradely” reshuffling of the O.C. and the formation of a *new* Central Committee consisting of any elements we please. I repeat:

¹ The original minutes give the beginning of the speech as follows: “Martov’s speech was so strange that I find myself obliged to protest emphatically against his statement of the case. As I see it, in the first place, Martov’s protest against the election of the editorial board, his

Martov's views on the admissibility of electing *part* of the previous board are evidence of utter confusion of political conceptions. I come now to the question of the "two groups of three." Comrade Martov said that this whole scheme of "two groups of three" was the work of one person, one member of the editorial board (namely, myself), and that no one else was responsible for it. *I categorically protest* against this assertion, and declare that it is quite untrue. Let me remind Comrade Martov that some weeks before the Congress I plainly told him and one other member of the editorial board that I would *demand* the *free election* of the editorial board at the Congress. I gave up this plan only because *Comrade Martov himself* suggested to me a more convenient plan of electing *two groups of three*. I then drew up the plan on paper and sent it *first of all* to Comrade Martov, who returned it to me with some amendments; here it is. I have the very copy, with Comrade Martov's amendments written in red ink. Afterwards a number of comrades saw the draft dozens of times, all the members of the editorial board saw it, and *no one at any time* formally objected to it. I say "formally," because, if I am not mistaken, Comrade Axelrod on one occasion made some private remark to the effect that he did not sympathise with the scheme. But it goes without saying that something more than a private remark was required to express the protest of the editorial board. It was not without reason that, even before the Congress, the editorial board adopted a formal decision to invite a definite *seventh* person, so that, in case it was necessary to make a collective statement at the Congress, an unalterable decision could be adopted—which we

refusal, and that of his colleagues, to work on the editorial board, which has yet to be elected, is in crying contradiction to what we all said (Martov included) when *Iskra* was declared the Party organ. We were told then that such recognition was pointless, since one cannot endorse a mere title without endorsing the editorial board; and Comrade Martov himself then explained, to those who objected that *this was not true*, that a definite political trend was being endorsed, that the composition of the editorial board was in no way prejudiced, and that the selection of the editors would come up later, on point 18 of our agenda. Therefore, Comrade Martov had *absolutely no right* to speak of the limited recognition of *Iskra*."—Ed.

so often failed to do on the board of six. And all the members of the editorial board know that the addition of a seventh permanent member to the board of six had been the subject of our constant consideration for a very long time. Thus, I repeat, the way out, in the form of the election of "two groups of three" was quite a natural one, and one which I incorporated in my draft *with the knowledge and consent* of Comrade Martov. And later on, Comrade Martov, together with Comrade Trotsky and others, again and again at a number of private meetings of *Iskra*-ists advocated the system of electing "two groups of three." In correcting Martov's statement about the private character of the two groups of three, I have no intention of assailing Martov's affirmation of the "political significance" of the step we took in refusing to endorse the old editorial board. On the contrary, I entirely and unreservedly agree with Comrade Martov when he says that this step is of great political significance—only not the significance that Martov attributes to it. He said it was an act in the struggle for influence over the Central Committee in Russia. I shall go further than Martov and say that the whole of *Iskra's* activity up to now has been a *struggle* for influence as a private group; but now, the issue is much bigger, *viz.*, the *organisational consolidation* of influence, and not only the struggle for it. The degree to which I differ from Comrade Martov *politically* can be seen from the fact that he *blames* me for desiring to influence the C.C., whereas I consider it *meritorious* on my part to have striven and to strive to consolidate that influence by organisational means. It turns out that we even speak different languages. What was the use of all our work, of all our efforts, if they were to be crowned by the old struggle for influence, and not by the complete acquisition and consolidation of influence? Yes, Comrade Martov is quite right: the step we have taken is undoubtedly a *big political step*, which bears witness to the selection of one of the tendencies which have now made themselves apparent in the further work of our Party. And I am not at all frightened by terrible words about "a state of siege in the Party," about "exceptional laws against individual persons and groups," and so forth. In regard to un-

stable and wavering elements, it is not only our right but our duty to create "a state of siege," and the whole of our Party rules, of our centralism now ratified by the Congress, is nothing but "a state of siege" against these numerous sources of *political diffusiveness*. It is precisely against diffusiveness that we need special, even exceptional, laws, and the step taken by the Congress has indicated the right political direction, by creating a reliable basis for *such* laws and *such* measures.

Speech delivered September 2 (August 20), 1903.

REPORT ON THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE R.S.D.L.P.
TO THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE LEAGUE OF
RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL-
DEMOCRATS ABROAD *

BEFORE beginning his report Lenin referred to the debates that had taken place at the preceding session on the question of the degree to which it is permissible to allude to the private meetings held by the *Iskra*-ists during the Party Congress. He interpreted yesterday's decision of the Congress as signifying that the reporters must not say more than is absolutely necessary about facts that are not recorded in the minutes. Consequently, when speaking of the meetings of the members of the *Iskra* organisation he intended to mention only the results of the voting.

After these introductory remarks he went on to speak of the period immediately preceding the Party Congress. In the O.C., whose business it was to prepare for the Congress, the *Iskra*-ists had a majority, and its work was carried on in an *Iskra*-ist direction. But even in the course of these preparations it became apparent that the O.C. was far from being completely united. To begin with, it included one Bundist¹ who took every opportunity to hinder the calling of a Congress of the *Iskra*-ist tendency; this member of the O.C. always pursued his own line. In addition, the O.C. included two members of the *Yuzhny Rabochy group*²; and although they claimed to be *Iskra*-ists and even announced their adherence to *Iskra*, on the subject of which negotiations were carried on for a very long time, they cannot be regarded as one hundred per cent *Iskra*-ists. Even the *Iskra*-ist members of the O.C. were not completely united, there were differences of opinion among them. It is also important to

¹ K. Portnoy.—*Ed.*

² V. N. Rozanov and E. Y. Levin.—*Ed.*

recall the decision of the O.C. on the question of imperative mandates. The question came up long before the Congress met and the decision was that imperative mandates must be abolished. The editorial board very definitely declared itself to be of the same mind. The decision applied to the editorial board itself. It was decided that as the Congress is the supreme authority in the Party, no member of the Party, or of the editorial board, should consider himself bound by any commitments to the organisation that elected him. In view of this decision I drew up a draft of the *Tagesordnung* of the Congress together with a commentary, which I intended to submit to the Congress in my own name. Point 23 of the draft had a marginal note about electing three persons to the editorial board and as many to the C.C. This point is connected with one further circumstance. As the editorial board consisted of six persons, it was decided by common consent that, in the event of it being necessary to convene a conference of the editorial board during the Congress, and in the event of the votes being divided equally, Comrade Pavlovich be invited to the conference with a decisive vote.

The delegates began assembling long before the opening of the Congress. The O.C. gave them the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the editors. Quite naturally, the *Iskra*-ists wished to present themselves to the Congress united and agreed on all points, and with this object in view private conversations were held with the arriving delegates, and meetings were organised with the object of establishing unity of views. At these meetings the political complexion of some of the delegates became definitely revealed. For instance, at one of the meetings, after I had read a paper on the national question, a delegate of the mining district spoke in the spirit of the P.P.S. and displayed extreme confusion of mind.

Such are the circumstances that preceded the Congress.

I must now explain why I turned out to be the only delegate of the League, although the latter had elected two. It appeared that no delegate had arrived from the *Iskra* organisation in Russia, which was to have sent two delegates. At a meeting of the *Iskra*-ists held just before the opening of the Congress, it

was decided that one of the two delegates sent by the League should surrender his mandate to the other delegate, and himself act as the delegate of the *Iskra* organisation with two mandates, with the provision that he was to give one of the two mandates of the *Iskra* organisation to the elected delegate from Russia if he arrived. Naturally, both Martov and I wanted to be the delegate of *Iskra* in view of the insignificant role played by the League. The question was decided by drawing lots.

The first preliminary question—the election of the Bureau of the Congress—gave rise to a certain, though insignificant, difference between Martov and me. The former insisted on nine persons being elected, and these to include even a Bundist. I considered that it was necessary to elect a bureau that would be able to pursue a firm, consistent policy and, if required, would even be capable of using the so-called “spiked gloves.”¹ Plekhanov, Lenin and Pavlovich were elected.

In addition to the five Bundists there were present at the Congress two delegates of the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad and the delegates of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, who nearly always voted with the latter. From the very outset these persons did what they could to prolong the debate. The debate on the standing orders of the Congress alone took up a tremendous amount of time. There were endless disputes, which took up several sessions, about the place of the Bund in the Party. The Bundist elected to the credentials commission was responsible for delays of the same kind. He tried to cause obstruction on every point. There was not a single question on which he agreed with the other members of the commission, one of whom was myself, and he always “reserved his opinion.” When it was remarked that this might protract the Congress, the Bundist replied, “let it be protracted,” and expressed his readiness to sit on the commission for any length of time. It was only long after midnight that we finished our work of verifying the delegates’ credentials.

On one of the first days of the Congress the O.C. incident occurred. According to the rule they had drawn up, only “pro-

¹ A Russian expression meaning to keep a tight rein.—Ed. Eng. ed.

minent Party members" could be invited to the Congress with a consultative vote; the credentials commission had rejected the request of the *Borba* group that it be given credentials. Two members of the O.C. were on that commission, and voted against admitting a representative of *Borba* to the Congress. When the reporter of the commission conveyed this decision to the Congress a long debate arose "for" and "against" admitting them, and one of the *Iskra*-ists expressed the opinion that no representative of *Borba* ought to be admitted to the Congress because that group did nothing but intrigue and try to insinuate itself into every chink, that it sowed dissension everywhere, and so on. (TROTSKY: *Why don't you give the name of the speaker? It was I who said it.* AXELROD: *Evidently the reporter does not think it would be in his interest.*) Yes, it was Comrade Trotsky who spoke so harshly of the *Borba* group. At the very height of the dispute about whether a representative of *Borba* should be admitted to the Congress or not, one of the *Yuzhny Rabochny* delegates, who had been late for the opening and had just arrived,¹ asked for a five minute adjournment to allow him to become acquainted with all the circumstances relating to the question under discussion. When the adjournment was granted the members of the O.C. held a conference, right near the window. It must be pointed out that even before the opening of the Congress some of the members of the O.C. had expressed their dissatisfaction with the editorial board. Thus the Bundist member of the O.C. was extremely indignant at the fact that the editorial board had sent its contribution of five hundred marks to the election fund of the German Social-Democrats in its own name and that of the O.C. without obtaining sanction from the latter. This innocent action, which was quite natural considering the impossibility of communicating in time with the comrades in Russia, was interpreted by the Bundist as meaning that the editors abroad used the name of the O.C. without asking the permission of the latter. A resolution was even moved in the O.C. to reprove the editors for this action, and this was passed

¹ E. Y. Levin.—*Ed.*

because Comrade N.N.,¹ though he was a member of the *Iskra*-ist organisation, supported the Bundist. When I informed Martov of this, he was very indignant and said it was "despicable." (MARTOV: *I did not use the word "despicable."*) I do not remember the actual expression he used. Martov added that he "will not leave the matter there." I tried to persuade him that the business was not so very important, and that it would be better to let it go and attach no serious importance to the incident. When the conference of the O.C. by the window ended, Comrade Pavlovich, who was one of its members, informed the other two members of the Bureau that, on the motion of the belated *Yuzhny Rabochy* delegate, who was also a member of the O.C., the O.C., by a majority of all against Pavlovich himself, had decided to invite a representative of *Borba*, Ryazanov, to the Congress with a consultative vote. Comrade Pavlovich strongly opposed this decision, and as imperative mandates had been abolished, he considered himself entitled to protest against the decision at the Congress. We, the members of the Bureau, as well as the editors and the other *Iskra*-ists, were very indignant at this decision of the O.C. The member of the O.C. I have already mentioned, Comrade N.N. himself, at a meeting of the credentials commission, had voted against admitting a representative of *Borba* to the Congress, and now at this conference of the O.C. he agreed to invite one. He himself was now trying to smuggle Ryazanov into the Congress. We had been caught in a trap. We decided to fight vigorously against this scandalous decision of the O.C. Many delegates spoke against it. In my speech on the subject I said: "what a storm of indignation is always raised at European congresses against those who say one thing in committee and another thing on the floor of the Congress." In saying this I had in mind Comrade N.N., a member of the *Iskra* organisation. When Comrade Pavlovich told the Congress that he had protested against this decision of the O.C., the *Yuzhny Rabochy* delegate said that this was a breach of discipline, a disruptive move, and so on, and demanded that the Congress inflict exemplary punishment on Comrade Pavlovich

¹ E. M. Alexandrova.—*Ed.*

for his action. But we succeeded in smashing all these arguments. The O.C. majority was defeated. A resolution was passed to the effect that after the Congress had appointed a credentials commission the O.C. as a body was no longer entitled to influence the way the Congress should be constituted. The motion to invite Ryazanov was rejected. But even after the Congress some of the *Iskra*-ists expressed doubt and asked: why not admit a member of *Borba* to the Congress? (DEUTSCH: *I said that at the Congress as well.*) Quite right, and on other questions, too, as I shall have occasion to point out, Comrade Deutsch did not always vote together with the other *Iskra*-ists, as for instance, on the question of the equal status of languages. There are *Iskra*-ists today who express exceedingly odd opinions, such as, for instance, that the activity of the C.C. must reflect all the vacillations and all the primitive conceptions that exist in the Party. Certain unstable, vacillating *Iskra*-ists spoke in the same way at the Congress. Thus, it turns out that the idea that all those who are regarded as *Iskra*-ists are really *Iskra*-ists is entirely mistaken. There are *Iskra*-ists who are ashamed to call themselves *Iskra*-ists, that is a fact. There are *Iskra*-ists who fight *Iskra*, who place obstacles in its way, who hold up its work. *Iskra* has become popular, it has become the fashion to call oneself an *Iskra*-ist, but this does not prevent people from remaining what they were before *Iskra* was recognised by a number of Party committees. Such unreliable *Iskra*-ists have done a great deal of harm. If they fought *Iskra* openly and squarely. . . . But no, they do it in an underhand way, from behind the corner, unobserved, secretly.

The second item on the *Tagesordnung* was the Party programme. The supporters of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, the Bundists and a number of individual delegates who were nicknamed the "Marsh" pursued a policy of incredible obstruction. The debate on the programme was drawn out beyond all belief. Akimov alone moved several score of amendments. There were arguments literally about single words, about what conjunction to use. So many amendments had to be discussed that one Bundist, a member of the programme commission, very ap-

propriately asked whose draft we were considering, the one submitted by the editors of *Iskra* or one submitted by Akimov? The amendments moved were insignificant and the programme was adopted without serious amendment; nevertheless, the debates took up about twenty sessions, so unproductive was the work of the Congress made by the opposition carried on by all sorts of anti-*Iskra*-ist and quasi-*Iskra*-ist elements.

The next major incident at the Congress, after the O.C. incident, was that in connection with the equal status of languages, or, as it was ironically called at the Congress, "the freedom of tongues." (MARTOV: *Or "of asses." Laughter.*) Yes, and "of asses." The point was this: the draft Party programme spoke of equal rights for all citizens regardless of sex, nationality, religion, etc. The Bundists were not satisfied with this and demanded that the programme include the right of every nationality to be taught in its own language, and also to use it in addressing all public and state institutions. In reply to a remark by a garrulous Bundist who quoted the State Remount Department as an example, Comrade Plekhanov remarked that the Remount Department had nothing to do with the question because horses do not possess the gift of speech and "it is only asses that do." The Bundists took offence, evidently taking the jest to be directed at them.

It was on the question of equal status of languages that the split first became apparent. In addition to the Bundists, the *Rubocheye Dyelo*-ists and the "Marsh," several *Iskra*-ists spoke in favour of the "freedom of tongues." The way Comrade Deutsch voted on this issue provoked our astonishment, indignation, etc.; he would either abstain or vote against us. In the end the question was decided amicably and unanimously.

Speaking generally, during the first half of the Congress the *Iskra*-ists acted in unison. The Bundists said there was a conspiracy against them. One Bundist described the Congress as "a compact majority." In reply I expressed the wish that the whole of our Party might become one compact majority.

The second half of the Congress presented a very different picture. From that moment begins Martov's historic *volte-face*.

The dissensions that now arose in our midst were by no means insignificant. They were caused by Martov's mistaken estimation of the present situation. Comrade Martov deviated from the line he had previously adhered to.

The fifth item on the *Tagesordnung* was the rules. A dispute had arisen in the commission between Martov and me concerning point 1. of that document. We each insisted on different formulæ. I proposed that a Party member be regarded as one who adheres to the Party programme, gives material support to the Party and belongs to one of the organisations of the Party. Martov, however, thought it sufficient if, in addition to the first two conditions, a member worked under the control of one of the Party organisations. I insisted on my formula and pointed out that we could not adopt any other definition of a member of the Party without abandoning the principle of centralism. To regard a person who does not belong to any Party organisation as a member of the Party meant opposition to all control by the Party. Martov was introducing a new principle entirely opposed to the principles of *Iskra*. Martov's formula stretched the boundaries of the Party. He argued that our Party must become a party of the masses. He left the door wide open for every kind of opportunist and stretched the boundaries of the Party until they became quite blurred. In the conditions in which we have to work this is very dangerous, because it would make it very difficult to draw a line between a revolutionary and an idle talker; this makes it necessary for us to restrict the concept of the Party. Martov's mistake was that he left the door of the Party wide open for every scamp, while it had become apparent that even at the Congress fully a third were mere intriguers. Martov on this occasion acted as an opportunist. The formula he proposed introduced a false note into the rules: every Party member must be under the control of an organisation in such a way that the C.C. may be able to reach him. The formula I proposed gave a stimulus to organisation. Comrade Martov cheapened the concept of the Party, while I thought that it must be placed on a high, very high plane. *Rabocheye Dyelo*, the Bund and the "Marsh" supported Martov, and with

their aid he was able to get his formulation of point 1 adopted.

Then Martov began to talk about "discrediting rumours" that were being circulated about him. There was no offence in pointing out whose ally Martov had turned out to be. I myself was the object of similar attacks when I found myself at one with Comrade Brooker. And I took no offence when Martov sent me a note with the words: "Look who is voting with you." It is true, my alliance with Brooker was temporary and accidental; whereas Martov's alliance with the Bund turned out to be a permanent one. I was opposed to Martov's formula because it was a *Versumpfung*.¹ I warned Martov of this, and our opponents, by following Martov as one man, served as an eloquent illustration of his error. The most dangerous thing, however, was not that Martov had slipped into the marsh, but that having accidentally slipped into it he made no attempt to get out of it, but was sucked in more and more. The Bundists felt that they were masters of the situation, and they left their impress on the Party rules.

During the second half of the Congress there was again a compact majority, but it now consisted of a coalition of Martovists, plus the "Marsh," plus the compact minority of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and the Bund. And this compact majority was opposed to the *Iskra*-ists. One Bundist, seeing the *Iskra*-ists quarrelling among themselves, said: "It is pleasant to argue when the leaders are fighting each other." Under these circumstances I fail to understand why the Bund should have left the Congress. They were masters of the situation and could have secured a great deal for themselves. Most probably, they had an imperative mandate.

After point 1 of the rules had been damaged in this way, we had to bind the broken vessel as tightly as possible with a double knot. Naturally, we began to apprehend plots and intrigues. Hence, it was necessary to introduce reciprocal co-optation in the central bodies so as to secure their unity of action for the Party. A fight arose on this issue. Matters had to be arranged in such a way as to prevent a repetition at the

¹ Becoming transformed into a marsh.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

Third Party Congress of what had occurred to the O.C. A consistent, honest *Iskra* cabinet had to be formed. On this point we were again defeated. The point about reciprocal co-optation to the central bodies was voted down. Martov's error, supported by the "Marsh," became still more vividly apparent. From that moment the coalition was definitely formed and, under the menace of defeat, we had to load our guns with double charges. The votes of the Bund and *Rabocheye Dyelo* were deciding the fate of the Congress. All this led to a fierce and stubborn struggle.

I shall now pass to the private meetings of the *Iskra* organisation. At these meetings we were chiefly occupied with the question of the constitution of the C.C. At all the four meetings of the *Iskra* organisation, there were debates on the question of Comrade N.N., on whom a section of the *Iskra*-ists wanted to pass a vote of political no-confidence, although not in the literal sense, for no one accused N.N. of anything dishonourable, but in the sense that N.N. was unfit to be a member of the *Iskra*-ist cabinet. This led to furious fights. At the last meeting sixteen voted against N.N., four voted in favour, the rest abstaining. At this meeting, also, the question was decided as to who was to be included in our cabinet. Martov and I proposed different "groups of three," and we could come to no agreement. As we did not want to split our vote at the Congress we decided to propose a compromise list. We were prepared to make every concession: I agreed to a list containing two Martovists. The minority rejected this. Incidentally, the *Yuzhny Rabochy* delegate refused to be included in our list, although he agreed to be included in the Martovist list. *Yuzhny Rabochy*—an outside element—decided the question of the C.C. After the split among the *Iskra*-ists, we had to recruit supporters, and we started vigorous agitation. The unexpected withdrawal of the Bund changed the whole situation at once. Once again there was a compact majority and a compact minority. We were the majority and we secured the election of the people we wanted to the C.C.

Such are the circumstances that led to the split. It was ex-

ceedingly tactless of Martov to raise the question of endorsing all the six editors of *Iskra* at the Congress, when he knew that I would insist on the editors being elected. It meant turning the question of electing the editors into a vote of no-confidence on certain individuals on the editorial board.

By five o'clock on Saturday the elections were over. We then proceeded to discuss the resolutions. We had only a few hours left for this. Owing to the obstacles and delays caused by the "Marsh," we had to drop a number of important items from the *Tagesordnung*; for instance, we had no time left to discuss all the tactical questions.

The attitude of the Congress to the resolutions was so unanimous that we received the impression that a conciliatory mood at last prevailed; it seemed to us that Martov was not going to make a political issue of the dissensions that had arisen. When one of the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists questioned the validity of the elections, he even remarked that the minority would submit to all the decisions of the Congress. All the resolutions were passed peacefully and amicably; there were dissensions only on the resolution proposed by Starover concerning the liberals. It was too diffuse, and it too bore the traces of opportunism; we fought it and secured the adoption of another resolution on the same question.*

The general impression one got from the Congress was that we had to fight against intrigues. It was impossible for us to work. The natural conclusion was: "Heaven preserve us from friends like these," *i.e.*, from quasi-*Iskra*-ists. Martov utterly failed to understand this. He elevated his mistaken position to a principle. His assertion that the majority had established a "state of siege" was in crying contradiction to the real needs of the Party. In order that the work might be more effective it was necessary to eliminate the deterrent elements and make them innocuous for the Party; only if we succeed in doing this will our work at the next Congress be more fruitful. That is why it was necessary to establish complete unity among the central bodies of the Party.

The first half of the Congress is diametrically opposed to the

second. The cardinal points of the whole Congress may be reduced to the following four major moments: 1) the O.C. incident; 2) the debates on the equal status of languages; 3) the debates on point 1 of the rules, and 4) the struggle about the elections to the Party centres.

During the first half of the Congress, we, together with Martov, were opposed to the O.C., the Bund, *Rabocheye Dyelo* and the "Marsh"; during the second half Martov accidentally fell into the marsh. Now, after the Congress, an accidental *Versumpfung* has become a real *Versumpfung*.

Report delivered October 27 (14), 1903.

A NOTE ON THE POSITION OF THE NEW ISKRA *

WHAT incenses me most of all in the position taken up by the "Martovist" *Iskra* is its internal *falsity and falsehood*, its attempts to evade the essence of the matter, its attempts to deceive Party public opinion and to evade Party decisions, and its attempts to *shuffle* ideas and facts. And I am inclined to think that the only way the obtuseness and indifference manifested by some comrades, their insensitiveness to this falsehood, can be accounted for is by their ignorance of the circumstances. Ignorance must be combated by explanation, and on no account shall I abandon my intention of explaining the whole matter in the greatest detail (if necessary, with *all* the documents) in a special pamphlet which I shall write as soon as the minutes of the Congresses of the Party and of the League are out, in other words, very soon.

The chief piece of *legerdemain* by means of which the Martovists are trying to *cheat* the Party (as they are in a state of hysterics it is possible, even probable, that they are deceiving themselves first and foremost) is, in the first place, their *conjuring* with the real sources and causes of the dissension among the *Iskra*-ists. In the second place, it is their *conjuring* with the concepts of circle spirit and disorganisation, of sectarianism and Party.

The first conjuring trick was to advance as a difference on "principle" what was really no more than *recrimination* between the two sides, after the Congress, during the struggle between the centres and the opposition. This recrimination consisted of the opposition calling the majority autocrats, formalists, bureaucrats, etc., while the majority called the opposition *hysterical sneaks* . . . a party of rejected Ministers or hysterical rowdies (see the Congress of the League**).

And now *one* side of these mutual "compliments" is being brought out in the C.O. as dissension *on principle*! Is this not despicable?

In reality the cause of the dissension was the *volte-face* of the *Martovists towards the marsh*. The *volte-face* became clearly apparent at the Congress in the debates on point 1 of the rules and during the voting at the election of the centres. *This* dissension, which in part was certainly a dissension *on principle*, is evaded or hushed up.

The second conjuring trick is that while, for *three months*, they have been *disorganising* the whole Party and all the work in the interests of a *circle*, in order to insinuate themselves into the centres (for no one ever wished to set limits to polemics on the essence of the question, or to the freedom to express opinion; on the contrary, the Martovists were invited and begged to write), the Martovists, now that they have got into the editorial board by the back door, by sleight-of-hand, substitute for this the ridiculous accusation that the majority is disruptively formalistic, bureaucratic, etc., and they *remain silent* about their own boycott, their own intrigues, etc. Is this not despicable? Either—or; either *consign* the whole "squabble" to *oblivion*, and in that case stop talking about it *altogether*, do not allow even *an echo of the squabble* to appear in the C.O., because all this shouting about bureaucracy is precisely an *echo* of the nastiest sort of sneaking; or raise the question of disagreements, and in that case, *make everything public*.

December 1903.

WHY I RESIGNED FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF *ISKRA*¹

A LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF *ISKRA*

THIS is not by any means a personal question. It is a question of the relation of the majority to the minority of our Party Congress. I am therefore duty bound to answer it at once and openly, not only because the delegates of the majority are bombarding me with questions, but because the article "Our Congress," which appears in No. 53 of *Iskra*, throws an *entirely false* light on the not very profound but disruptive disagreement among the *Iskra*-ists to which the Congress led.*

The article gives an account of the matter that makes it impossible for anyone, even with the help of a magnifying glass, to discover a *single* serious cause for disagreement, to find so much as a shadow of explanation of a fact such as the change in the constitution of the editorial board of the C.O., or to find even the pretence of a valid reason for my resigning from the board. We disagreed on the question of the organisation of the Party centres, says the writer of the article, on the question of the relation of the C.O. to the C.C., on the method of achieving centralism, on the limits and the nature of possible and useful centralisation, and the harm of bureaucratic formalism.

Really? Did we not *disagree* on the question of the constitution of the centres, whether it was permissible to boycott the centres because one did not like the people that had been elected by the Congress, to disrupt practical work, to alter the decisions of the Party Congress to please a certain *circle* of Social-Democrats abroad, like the majority of the League? ²

¹ I sent this letter to *Iskra* immediately after No. 53 appeared. The editors refused to publish it in No. 54, so I am compelled to publish it as a separate leaflet.

² I.e., the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

You know perfectly well, comrades, that this was precisely the case. But the great majority of the most influential and most active Party workers do not know this yet, and so I shall briefly outline the main facts, because before long, according to an announcement in *Iskra*, No. 53, all the material relating to the history of our disagreements will be published.

At our Congress—as the writer of the article we are discussing and the Bund delegation in their recently published report rightly point out—the *Iskra*-ists had a considerable majority, about three-fifths according to my calculation, even before the withdrawal of the delegates of the Bund and of *Rabocheye Dyelo*. During the first half of the Congress the *Iskra*-ists were unanimous in their opposition to all the anti-*Iskra*-ists and inconsistent *Iskra*-ists. This was brought out particularly plainly in connection with two incidents in the first half of the Congress, incidents that are important for the understanding of our disagreements: the O.C. incident and the incident in connection with the equal status of languages¹ (the latter issue was the only one on which the compact majority of *Iskra*-ists dropped from three-fifths to one-half). During the latter half of the Congress the *Iskra*-ists began to diverge and by the end of the Congress they had completely diverged. The controversies around point 1 of the Party rules and around the elections to the centres clearly show the nature of the disagreements: the *Iskra*-ist minority (with Martov at their head) became the rallying point for an increasing number of non-*Iskra*-ists and of vacillating elements, and opposed the majority of *Iskra*-ists (which included Plekhanov and me). This group did not take definite shape on the issue of point 1 of the rules, nevertheless, the votes of the Bundists and two of the three *Rabocheye Dyelo* votes assured the *Iskra*-ist minority of a majority. At the election of the centres the *Iskra*-ist majority (thanks to the withdrawal of five Bundists and two *Rabocheye Dyelo* votes from the Congress) became the majority of the Party Congress. And it is only at this point that we disagreed in the strict sense of the word.

¹ See "An Account of the Second Congress of the R. S. D. L. P." and "Report to the Second Congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad," in this volume.—Ed.

We profoundly disagree, first of all, on the constitution of the C.C. After the O.C. incident, at the very beginning of the Congress, the *Iskra*-ists, at unofficial meetings of the *Iskra* organisation, began hotly to discuss various members (*and non-members*) of the O.C. as candidates for the C.C. After prolonged and heated debates they rejected one of the candidatures supported by Martov¹ by a majority of nine to four, three abstaining; the list of five was adopted by a majority of ten to two, four abstaining; *on my proposal*, the list included one leader of the non-*Iskra*-ist elements and one leader of the *Iskra*-ist minority.² But the minority insisted on having three out of five, and as a result suffered utter defeat at the Congress. The great battle waged at the Congress on the question of whether the old group of six should be endorsed or a new group of three be elected for the editorial board of the C.O. ended in the same way.³

Only from this moment did the divergence become so complete that it gave rise to the idea of a split; only from this moment did the minority (which now became a real "compact" minority) begin to abstain from voting in a hitherto unprecedented way.* After the Congress the divergence became increasingly accentuated. The discontented minority adopted a policy of boycott which has lasted for months. Quite obviously, the charges of bureaucratic formalism, of demanding absolute,

¹ The candidate was E. M. Alexandrova; see "An Account of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P." and "Report to the Second Congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad," in this volume.—*Ed.*

² The non-*Iskra*-ist leader was V. N. Rozanov; the leader of the *Iskra*-ist minority was L. D. Trotsky.—*Ed.*

³ As this notorious "group of three" has given rise to endless talk and twaddle, I shall point out at once that long before the Congress all the comrades who were at all closely connected had been acquainted with my commentary on the draft *Tagesordnung* of the Congress. The commentary, which was circulated at the Congress, contains the following: "The Congress elects three persons to the editorial board of the C.O. and three to the C.C. These six persons sitting *as one body* may, if necessary, by a two-thirds majority complete the C.O. and the C.C. by co-optation, and report to the Congress on the matter. After this report has been approved by the Congress, additional members will be co-opted by the editorial board of the C.O. and by the C.C. separately."

automatic obedience, and similar nonsense, which grew out of this soil, are merely an attempt to shift responsibility, and this is sufficiently illustrated by the following typical case. The new editorial board (*i.e.*, Plekhanov and I) invited all the former editors to become contributors; the invitation, of course, was at first made without any "formalism," by word of mouth. It met with a refusal. We then wrote a "letter" (what bureaucrats!) to the "dear comrades" asking them to contribute in general, and in particular to *set forth their disagreements in the columns of the publications of which we were the editors*. We received a formal statement to the effect that they did not wish to *have anything to do with Iskra*. And for several months not one of the non-editors worked for *Iskra*. Relations became exclusively formal and bureaucratic—on whose initiative?

An underground literature began to be produced which became widespread abroad, was distributed to the committees, and is now beginning in part to return from Russia. The report of the delegate for Siberia, —n's¹ letter on the slogans of the "opposition," Martov's "Once Again a Minority" are full of the most amusing charges against Lenin, accusing him of "autocracy," of establishing a Robespierre regime of executions* (*sic!*), of staging the political burial of old comrades (non-election to the centres is the burial!), etc. In the course of events the opposition is drawn into a quest for differences on "principle" on questions of organisation which preclude all team-work. The notorious "fifth member" of the Council of the Party is bandied about particularly. In all these literary productions the formation of the Council is represented as Lenin's diplomacy or trickery, an instrument by means of which the C.O. abroad might suppress the C.C. in Russia—which is exactly the way the matter is presented by the Bund delegation in their report on the Congress. Needless to say, these differences on principle are as nonsensical as the notorious bureaucratic formalism: the fifth member has to be elected by the Congress, so that it is a matter of the *person* who most deserves the confidence of the majority; and whatever form of organisa-

¹ F. I. Dan.—*Ed.*

tion the Party centres may take, the will of the majority of the Party Congress will always manifest itself in the choice of definite persons.

How widely this literature was circulated abroad may be judged by the fact that even good Parvus took the warpath against the attempt to unite all the threads in one hand and to "give orders" (*sic!*) to the workers from some place like Geneva. (*Aus der Weltpolitik*,¹ V. Jahrgang, No. 48, 30-XI-'03.) In a month or so our new enemy of autocracy will read the minutes of the Party Congress and of the League Congress, and will realise how easy it is to make a fool of oneself when one accepts all sorts of *Parteiklatsch*² at face value.

The climax of the opposition's military operations against the centres was marked by the Congress of the League. From the minutes of this Congress the reader will be able to judge whether those who called it an arena for settling accounts over the Party Congress were right, and whether there was anything in the onslaught of the opposition that provoked the C.C. to measures of a rather exceptional nature* (as the C.C. itself put it when the change in the editorial board offered some hope of restoring peace in the Party). The resolutions of this Congress reveal the nature of the differences "on principle" on the question of autocratic bureaucracy.

After the Congress of the League the split atmosphere became so menacing that Plekhanov decided to co-opt all the former editors. I foresaw that the opposition would not be satisfied with this and I did not think it permissible to change a decision of the Party Congress to please a *circle*. But I thought it still less permissible to stand in the way of a possible restoration of peace in the Party; so, after No. 51 of *Iskra*, I resigned from the editorial board, stating at the same time that I was not refusing to continue as a contributor, and that I did not even insist on having my resignation announced publicly if by that a good peace would be established in the Party.** The opposition

¹ A German Social-Democratic journal, where the article by Parvus appeared.—*Ed.*

² Party scandal.—*Ed.*

demanding (not a change in the non-existent system of bureaucracy, formalism, autocracy, automatism, etc., but) the reinstatement of the former editorial board, the co-optation of representatives of the opposition to the C.C., two seats in the Council and the recognition of the validity of the Congress of the League. The C.C. offered to secure peace by agreeing to co-opt two members to the C.C., by granting one seat in the Council and by agreeing that the League be gradually reorganised. These terms were also rejected by the opposition. The editors were co-opted, but peace remained an open question. Such was the state of affairs when No. 53 of *Iskra* appeared.

It is hardly permissible to doubt that the Party desires peace and positive work. But articles like "Our Congress" are an obstacle to peace; they are an obstacle because they bring in hints and fragments of questions that remain obscure and cannot be understood unless all the stages of the divergence are set forth, they are an obstacle because they try to shift the blame from the circle abroad to our working centre, which is engaged in the difficult and arduous task of uniting the Party, and which has been meeting quite enough obstacles in the way of introducing centralism without that. The committees in Russia must fight against the disruptive activity and boycott tactics of the minority which is hindering all the work. Resolutions to this effect have been received from the committees in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Nizhni, Tver, Odessa, Tula and the Northern League.

We have had enough of this foreign *Literatengezänk!*¹ Let it serve the practical workers in Russia as an example of "*what should not be done*"! Let the editors of the Party's C.O. appeal to everyone to put an end to all boycotts, no matter from what side, and to work as one man under the leadership of the C.C. of the Party!

* * *

But the reader may ask: what about the difference in shades of opinion among the *Iskra*-ists? Our answer will be: in the first place, the difference lies in that the majority believes that

¹ Journalists' quarrel.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

one can and must support one's ideas in the Party regardless of changes in the personnel of the centres. Every circle, even that of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, on joining the Party, is entitled to demand the right to be heard and to defend its views; but no circle, not even a circle of generals, is entitled to demand representation in the Party centres. In the second place, the difference lies in that the majority believes that the charge of formalism and bureaucracy falls on those who, by refusing to work under the guidance of the centres, made it difficult to carry on the work in any other than a formal way. In the third place, I am aware of one and of *only one* difference on principle on questions of organisation, namely, the difference which found expression in the debate on point 1 of the Party rules. We hope to return to this question when the minutes of the Congress are published. We shall then be able to show that it was not an accident that the formula proposed by Martov was carried with the help of non-*Iskra*-ist and quasi-*Iskra*-ist elements, but that it was a step in the direction of opportunism, and the step is still more apparent in —n's letter and in "Once Again a Minority."¹ The minutes will demonstrate the falsity of the view held by the writer of the article, "Our Congress," which asserts that "the controversy during the discussion of the Party rules was concentrated almost exclusively on the question of the organisation of the central bodies of the Party." The very opposite is the case. The only real controversy on principle that divided the two "sides" (i.e., the majority and the minority of the *Iskra*-ists) at all distinctly was that on point 1 of the Party rules. As for the controversies on the constitution of the Council, on co-optation to the centres, etc., these were nothing more than controversies between individual delegates, between Martov and me, etc.; they were controversies about relatively very minor details and did not give rise to any definite groupings of *Iskra*-ists, who by their votes corrected first one and then another of us when we went too far. To assert that these controversies are

¹ We shall then also ask to have explained what the article "Our Congress" means by talking about an undeserved lack of attention to the non-*Iskra*-ists, and about the strict points of the rules not corresponding to the real relation of forces in the Party. What do these assertions refer to?

the source of our dissensions on such questions as how to enforce centralism, on its limits and character, etc., amounts simply to whitewashing the position taken by the minority and the methods they employed in their struggle to change the personnel of the centres, a struggle which was the only thing that provoked divergence in the full sense of the word.

December 1903.

LETTER TO G. M. KRZHIZHANOVSKY, MEMBER
OF THE C.C.*

Geneva, December 18, 1903.

DEAR FRIEND,

We must thoroughly thrash out the question on which we appear to differ, and I earnestly ask you to have this letter discussed by all the members of the C.C. (or of the Executive Committee**). The disagreement is this: 1) You believe peace with the Martovists to be possible (Boris¹ even congratulates us on having concluded peace! *** Absurd and sad!). 2) You believe that an immediate congress would testify to our impotence. I am convinced that on both points you are very much in the wrong. 1) The Martovists are on the warpath. At a meeting in Geneva Martov talked very loudly about their being a force. In the paper² they abuse us, shuffle the question despicably and cover up their sneaking methods by an outcry against your bureaucracy. Martov goes on shouting right and left about the complete worthlessness of the C.C. In a word, it is naive and absolutely impermissible to doubt that the aim of the Martovists is to capture the C.C. by means of the same sneaking methods, boycott and scandals. We are not in a position to fight them on this ground because the C.O. is a terrible weapon and our defeat is certain, especially in view of the arrests. By losing time you court the certain and complete defeat of the entire majority, you swallow the insults hurled at the C.C.**** from abroad (by the League) in silence and ask for more. 2) A congress will prove our strength, it will prove that, not only in words but in deeds, we do not allow a clique of rowdies abroad to order the whole movement about. We need the congress pre-

¹ V. A. Noskov, member of the C.C.—*Ed.*

² *Iskra*.—*Ed.*

cisely now when we have the slogan "fight disorganisation." This slogan is the only thing that can justify a congress and justify it fully in the eyes of all Russia. If you miss this opportunity you will miss this slogan and prove your impotent passive submission to the Martovists. To dream of strengthening your position by positive work in spite of the baiting carried on by the C.O., of the boycott and of the Martovist agitation, is simply comical. It means slow self-destruction in an inglorious struggle with intriguers, who will afterwards say (and are already saying): look how unworkable this C.C. is! I repeat, do not beguile yourselves with illusions. Either you dictate peace to the Martovists at the congress, or else you will be ingloriously kicked out, or someone will be put in your place after the very first arrests. Today a congress has an aim, *viz.*, to put an end to the impossible disorganisation, to get rid of the League * which laughs at all C.C.'s, to get firm hold of the Council and to organise the C.O. properly. How can it be properly organised? At the *very worst* by leaving the Five (or restoring the Six),¹ but this worst is unlikely if we have a big majority. We shall then either get the better of the Martovists for good (Plekhanov is *already talking* of a new *Vademecum*,² for he realises that there is no peace and threatens to attack both sides. Nothing would suit us better!), or we shall frankly say that we have no C.O. to lead us and we shall turn it into a debating organ which will freely print signed articles by the majority and the minority (still better: to confine all polemics against the Martovists to pamphlets and to use *Iskra* only for the purpose of fighting the government and the enemies of Social-Democracy).

Hence, give up the naive hope of working peacefully in this impossible atmosphere. Concentrate all your *main* forces on

¹ The Five were the editorial board of *Iskra* after Plekhanov had co-opted the Martovists. They were: Plekhanov, Martov, Axelrod, Zasulich and Potresov. The Six were the editorial board of *Iskra* prior to the Second Congress, and included the five above named and Lenin.—*Ed.*

² On Plekhanov's pamphlet, entitled *Vademecum*, against *Rabocheye Dyelo*, published in Geneva, February 1900, see note to page 42* in this volume.—*Ed.*

visiting the local organisations, let Lan¹ go, *make absolutely sure* of your committees at once, then launch an attack on the others . . . and the congress, the congress not later than January!

P. S. If Martov asks Lan about publication,* let Lan without fail pass his vote to Kol,** otherwise there will be the deuce of a scandal! Martov and Dan are impossibly rude to Kol when they meet him!

P. P. S. Today, the 18th, another despicable act by the Martovists: their refusal to publish in No. 54 my letter explaining why I resigned from the editorial board,² on the pretext that Hans was opposed to the publication of documents (the liars! Hans was opposed on the condition that *peace* was restored). The refusal was accompanied by a heap of despicable arguments, as, for instance, that the C.C. had tried to capture the C.O.,*** that negotiations were being conducted with a view to restoring confidence in the C.C., etc. Their tactics are clear: hypocritically to cover the opposition of the Dans and the Martyns,³ etc., to the C.C. and surreptitiously to throw mud at the C.C. in the paper. I shall not leave the despicable No. 53 issue unanswered under any circumstances. Wire me at once stating whether 1) you agree to my publishing my letter in a publication other than *Iskra*—*Actien* 203⁴; 2) whether you agree to concentrate all forces on the congress—*Actien* 204; if you agree to both points wire *Actien* 407; if to neither wire *Actien* 45.

The day after tomorrow I shall send you my letter explaining why I resigned from the editorial board. If you are opposed to convening a congress immediately and intend to bear Martov's insults in silence, I shall probably have to resign also from the C.C.

¹ Lan and Hans—G. M. Krzhizhanovsky.—*Ed.*

² See preceding article in this volume.—*Ed.*

³ V. N. Rozanov.—*Ed.*

⁴ The code in which the reply to the respective questions was to be sent.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

LETTER TO THE RUSSIAN BUREAU OF THE C.C.*

Geneva, December 30, 1903.

WE have received your letter of December 10 (old style). We are amazed and shocked at your silence on the vital questions and your irregularity in answering letters. This is not the way to do business! If Medved¹ and Mrs. Lan² are unable to write every week you must get another secretary. Just imagine, Lan has not yet sent us anything detailed! Our letter of December 10 (new style) still remains unanswered (after 20 days). This disgraceful state of affairs must be stopped at all costs!

Further. We absolutely insist on the necessity of fully clearing up our position in the fight against the Martovists, of arriving at complete agreement and of adopting a very definite line.

Why have you not sent Boris here as Hans wanted to when he was here? After being here Boris would not go on writing these absurd speeches about peace. Why has not Hans kept his promise to send the Old Man³ a precise account of Boris' state of mind? If you cannot send Boris, send Mitrofan⁴ or Zver⁵ to carry on the work.

I repeat again and again: Hans' principal mistake is that he goes on trusting his last impression. No. 53 should have brought him back to his senses. The Martovists captured the C.O. in order to wage war, and now war has broken out all along the line: baiting in *Iskra*, the fight at the public lectures (the other day Martov, in Paris, lectured on the split before an audience of a hundred and had a fight with Lebedev**), the most bare-faced agitation against the C.C. It would be unpardonably short-

¹ Marie I. Ulyanova (Lenin's sister).—*Ed.*

² Z. P. Krzhizhanovsky, wife of G. M. Krzhizhanovsky.—*Ed.*

³ Lenin.—*Ed.*

⁴ F. V. Gusarov.—*Ed.*

⁵ M. M. Essen.—*Ed.*

sighted to think that all this cannot spread to Russia. Over here things have come to a breach of relations between the C.O. and the C.C. (resolution of the C.O. of December 22 which has been sent to you*), to the publication of *lies* in the C.O. (No. 55 of *Iskra*) to the effect that an *agreement* has been reached not to publish a report of the negotiations.**

It is time you gave serious thought to the whole political situation; you must take a broader view, abstract yourselves from the petty day-to-day troubles with pence and passports and, instead of hiding your heads under your wings, make clear to yourselves where you are going and *why* you are messing around with this.

If I am not mistaken there are two tendencies in our C.C. (or are there three? In that case what are they?). In my opinion they are the following: 1) to procrastinate in the matter and put off calling a congress, while as far as possible bearing their attacks and their insolent spitting in our faces in silence, and to strengthen the position in Russia; 2) to raise a storm of resolutions against the C.O., concentrating *all* forces on winning over the vacillating committees, and to get ready for a congress in two, at the maximum three, months. Now I ask you, what does your strengthening of positions amount to? It merely amounts to your losing time while the enemy gathers his forces over here (and the forces abroad mean a great deal!) and putting off your decision until your arrest. Arrest is inevitable, and that very soon—it would be childish to ignore it.

What will you leave us with when you are arrested? The Martovists have fresh and growing forces. We have nothing but broken ranks. They have a strengthened C.O. We have a set of people engaged in inefficiently transporting a C.O. which does nothing but abuse them. This is the way to certain defeat! This is nothing but shamefully and stupidly deferring *inevitable* defeat. You are content to shut your eyes to these things, taking advantage of the fact that the war is only slowly spreading to you from abroad. For your tactics literally come to this: after us (after the present C.C.), the deluge (deluge for the majority).

I think that even if defeat is inevitable we must withdraw frankly, honestly and openly, and this can only be done at a congress. But defeat is by no means inevitable, because the Five are *not* agreed among themselves. Plekhanov is not with them, but for *peace*, and a congress could *put the blanket* on both Plekhanov and them with their alleged dissensions. The only serious argument against a congress is that it would inevitably legalise the split. And I reply to this: 1) even that would be better than what we have now, because then we could withdraw honourably and not prolong this humiliating position of being spat at; 2) the Martovists have missed the opportunity for a split, and it is unlikely that they will withdraw from the Third Congress, for the present struggle and publication in full¹ precludes the possibility of a split; 3) if we must bargain with them the best place to do so would be at the congress.

Think this matter over seriously and do reply, giving the opinion of each (without fail, of each) member of the C.C. Don't bother me about the leaflets*: I am not a machine and cannot work amidst the present disgraceful state of affairs.

Geneva, January 2, 1904.

Post scriptum: I have just received the proofs of Axelrod's article for No. 55 of *Iskra* (No. 55 will be out in two days). It is far more despicable than Martov's article ("Our Congress") in No. 53. It contains such things as "ambitious phantasies," "inspired by the traditions of the dictatorship of Schweizer" **; accusations to the effect that "an omniscient centre" "at its personal [*sic!*] discretion disposes of" "Party members who have been turned [!!] into screws and cogwheels"; "the setting up of innumerable ministries, departments, sections, offices, workshops"; the transformation of revolutionaries (that is exactly what he says!) "into heads of offices, clerks, sergent-majors, N.C.O.'s, privates, watchmen, artisans [*sic!*]"; the C.C. (according to the majority) "must be nothing more than the

¹ Lenin alludes to the publication of a report of the negotiations between the C.C. and the opposition that took place abroad in November 1903.—*Ed.*

collective agent of that authority [the authority of the editorial board of *Iskra*], and is placed under its strict tutelage and watchful control." Such, we are told, is the "organisational utopia of a theocratic character" (*sic!*). "The triumph of a bureaucratic centralism in the Party organisation—such is the sum total . . ." (this is exactly what he says!). This article makes me appeal again and again to all the members of the C.C.: can this be left without a protest and without a struggle? Don't you realise that by submitting to this you become nothing more nor less than peddlars of scandal (about Schweizer and his pawns) and circulators of calumny (about bureaucrats, *i.e.*, about yourselves and the whole majority)? Do you believe it is possible to carry on "positive work" under an "ideological leadership" of this sort? Or do you know of any other way of waging an honest fight than by convening a congress??

(The Martovists appear to have Kiev, Kharkov, the mining district, Rostov and the Crimea behind them. That makes ten votes+the League+the editors of the C.O.+two in the Comcil=16 votes out of 49. If we concentrate all our forces on Nikolayev, Siberia and the Caucasus at once, we can *easily* keep them with one-third.*)

TO MEMBERS OF THE PARTY*

A circle or a party? This is the question our C.O. has submitted for discussion.

We are of the opinion that the question has been raised at a very opportune moment. We invite the editors of our C.O. to begin by taking a look at themselves. What is this editorial board? Is it a circle of persons who have lived together for such and such a number of years and have now attained the post of editors by means of boycott, of disruptive work and of threats of a split, or is it a body of officials of our Party?

Do not try to evade the question by arguing that you were co-opted legally, in accordance with the rules. We do not question the legality of it; we invite you not to confine yourselves to the formal point of view, but to answer the essence of our question. We want, not merely a juridical, but a political answer. We want an answer from *you*, gentlemen, who were never elected by the Congress and never appointed by the Party to be editors, and not from Comrade Plekhanov, who, perhaps, had no alternative but to co-opt you in order to avoid a split.

A circle or a body of Party officials?

If you are a circle, then why all this hypocrisy and sham, all these phrases about a party? Have you not broken up that Party, and spent weeks and months mocking at its institutions and its rules? Did you not tear the decisions of the Second Congress of that Party to bits, did you not bring matters to the point of a split, did you not refuse to submit to the C.C. and to the Council? Have you not placed yourselves outside the Party by all this talk about your not regarding Party congresses as being divine, *i.e.*, as binding? You trample upon the institutions and the laws of the Party and at the same time you are pleased to put the sub-title "Central Party Organ" in the heading of your paper.

But if you are the officials of the Party, would you mind explaining to the Party why, and in the name of what, persons who were never appointed by the Congress should try to obtain posts for themselves in a central institution of the Party? Perhaps to preserve the "continuity" of the family circle of editors? And those who voted for resolutions in favour of this philistine "continuity" at the Congress of the League * now want to bamboozle us with talk about the Party! Have you any right to talk about the Party?

You call those who take their stand on the formal decisions of the Second Congress formalists—because you must blur and gloss over the fact that you *betrayed the trust* of your comrades, who, everyone of them, over and over again, pledged themselves to obey the decisions of the Congress.** You do not submit to formal decisions when they are against you, but at the same time you unblushingly invoke the formal rights of the League when those rights are to your advantage, you invoke the formal decisions of the Council of the Party because, against the will of the Party, you have succeeded in getting into this body, the supreme body of the Party.

You call those who occupy a Party appointment by the will of the Party Congress, and not by the caprice of a group of emigrant journalists, bureaucrats. But you do this in order to conceal the disagreeable fact that it is precisely those who are quite unable to work in the Party unless they are members of the central Party institutions who are saturated with the spirit of bureaucracy, with the spirit of precedence, with the spirit of hunting for honours. Yes, your behaviour has indeed opened our eyes to the fact that our Party suffers from a bureaucracy that places office above work and shuns neither boycott nor disruption in the effort to get into office.

You say that a decision of the Party Congress arrived at by a majority is crudely mechanical, but do not the methods of struggle employed in the colonies abroad, and in the League which assured you your shameful victory over our Party editorial board, appear to you to be crudely mechanical and scandalous? You do not see anything pharisaical in the assurances that

they recognise the Party made by those who have striven for and have obtained control of the central Party organ although they were a *minority* at the Party Congress!

And you call these hypocritical efforts to whitewash your indecent, anti-Party behaviour, this preaching of anarchy, these insults hurled at the Party Congress, these opportunist efforts to justify philistinism and the circle spirit—you call this your new organisational point of view!

Comrades! Those who seriously regard themselves as members of the Party must raise an emphatic protest and put a stop to this shameful state of affairs! Those who seriously regard *Iskra's* three years of work and the Party Congress which it prepared and which gave expression to the will of those Russian Social-Democrats who are really men of conviction and principles and who are really working—these will never allow the circle spirit abroad to trample upon all that the Congress achieved.

One of two things: Either we have no Party and are utterly in the power of a group of journalists abroad, of a circle of editors which was rejected by our Congress—in that case, down with this hypocritical talk about a party, down with the false headings on “Party” publications, organs and institutions! We are not Socialist-Revolutionaries, we have no use for painted scenery. The party of the proletariat demands the truth. The party of the proletariat demands the ruthlessly outspoken exposure of the obsolete circle spirit. Let us have the courage to admit that there is no Party and set to work to make and strengthen a real party from the beginning, from the very beginning. We shall not be deterred by the temporary victory of the circle spirit, we believe and we know that the class conscious Russian proletariat will succeed in building for itself a real party and not a party in name only, a party that is a party because it has real party institutions and not because it uses false headings.

Or we have a party—and in that case, down with all circle interests, down with meetings of rowdies abroad! In that case those who were never appointed editors by our Party Congress

must resign at once from our *Party* editorial board. In that case the editorial board of the central organ, consisting of comrades elected at the Congress, must be restored. In that case, let *our* Party organ advocate the views of the Party majority, let *our* Party organ defend the Party organisation and the Party institutions instead of trampling them in the mud.

Down with the circle spirit and, first of all, down with it on our Party editorial board!

Down with disrupters!

Long live the party of the proletariat, the party that is able in practice to obey the decisions of the Party Congress and to respect Party discipline and organisation!

Down with pharisaic talk and false headings!

January 1904.

LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE*

For the C.C. (To be handed over to N.N.¹)

Geneva, January 31, 1904.

YESTERDAY the meetings (three) of the Party Council came to an end. These meetings throw a definite light on the whole political situation in the Party. Plekhanov has joined the Martovists, and they are steam-rolling us on all issues of any importance. Our resolution condemning boycott, etc. (boycott *on both sides*), was not put to the vote: the only thing adopted was a resolution drawing a distinction in principle between permissible and impermissible methods of struggle. Instead, a resolution proposed by Plekhanov was passed to the effect that it is desirable that the C.C. co-opt a *corresponding* (*sic!*) number of members of the minority. After that we withdrew our resolution and entered a protest; we expressed opposition to this policy of settling accounts in disputes over precedence on the Council. Three members of the Council (Martov, Axelrod and Plekhanov) replied that it was "below their dignity" to examine our protest. We declared that a congress is the only *honest* way out. The Council killed the motion. Three members passed resolutions making it legal (!) for the editorial board to send out its representatives independently of the C.C. and instructing the C.C. to supply the editorial board with literature in the quantity required for distribution (!!). This means supplying them with literature for them to transport and distribute, because they have been dispatching "agent" after "agent" who *refuse* to accept commissions from the C.C. Besides, they have the means of transport ready (it was suggested that half and half be carried).

¹ L. E. Halperin, member of the C.C., who at that time was at the head of the organising work of the Russian Bureau of the C.C.—*Ed.*

An article by Plekhanov appeared in *Iskra* (No. 57) in which he calls our C.C. *eccentric*¹ (it includes no representative of the minority) and proposes that such representatives be co-opted.* How many, we are not told; according to private information, no less than *three* out of a very restricted list (five or six, it would seem), possibly accompanied by the demand that someone on the C.C. resign.

One must be blind not to see by now what the game is. The Council will go on exercising pressure on the C.C. *by every possible means*, demanding complete surrender to the Martovists. Either an immediate congress, the immediate collection of resolutions calling for a congress from eleven or twelve committees, the immediate concentration of all forces on agitation for a congress; or the resignation of the whole C.C., because no one on the C.C. will agree to play the degrading, ridiculous role of having to accept people who *thrust* themselves on one and will not be satisfied until they have control of everything and who, to have their way, will drag every triviality before the Council.

Kurtz² and I insistently demand that the C.C. *meet at once at all costs* and settle the matter, taking our votes into account, of course. We insistently repeat for the hundredth time: either an immediate congress, or resignation. We invite those who do not agree with us to come over here and judge on the spot. Let them try to get on with the Martovists *in practice*, instead of writing empty phrases on the benefits of peace.

We have no money. The C.O. heaps expenses on us with the obvious intention of driving us into bankruptcy, and with the obvious hope that a financial crash will follow, in order that they may be able to take emergency measures that would reduce the C.C. to nought.

Two or three thousand rubles are wanted immediately and at all costs, without fail and without delay; otherwise, in a month's time, the crash will be *complete*.

¹ By this Plekhanov meant that the C.C. did not represent the Party as a whole, but only a part of it.—*Ed.*

² F. V. Lengnik, member of the C.C. and its representative abroad.—*Ed.*

We repeat: think it over carefully, *send delegates here* and look things straight in the face. Our last word is: either a congress, or the resignation of the whole C.C. Reply at once stating whether you give us your votes.* If you do not, then let us know at once *what to do in case Kurtz and I resign*, let us know without fail.

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LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN RUSSIA*

THE Old Man¹ writing. I have read the letters of Zemlyachka and Konyagin.² Allah only knows where he got the idea that I had realised the uselessness of a congress. On the contrary, I continue to insist that this is the only honest way out, and that only shortsightedness and cowardice can shrink from this conclusion. I continue to insist that Boris, Mitrofan and Horse³ should be sent here without fail, because you people must see the situation with your own eyes (especially as it stands after the meeting of the Council), and not spin yarns from afar, hiding your heads under your wings and taking advantage of the fact that it takes years to get from here to the C.C. even on the fastest steed.

Nothing is more absurd than the notion that preparatory work for the congress, agitation in the committees, passing sensible and emphatic (and not sloppy) resolutions in the committees, *precludes* "positive" work, or is in contradiction to it. This notion only reveals an inability to understand the political situation that has matured in the Party.

The Party has been practically broken up, the rules have been converted into a rag, the organisation has been spat upon—only complacent Poshekhonians⁴ can still fail to see this. Those who understand this must realise that the Martovist offensive must be met with an offensive (and not with banal talk about peace, etc.). All our forces must be employed for the offensive. Technical work, transport, receiving literature must be left *en-*

¹ Lenin.—*Ed.*

² L. E. Halperin.—*Ed.*

³ V. A. Noskov, F. V. Gusarov and L. V. Krassin.—*Ed.*

⁴ Poshekhoniya, in the writings of Saltykov-Shchedrin, is the home of obtuse, lazy-minded and slothful provincials.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

tirely to auxiliary forces, assistants, agents. It is extremely irrational to put members of the C.C. on this work.* The members of the C.C. must *capture* all the committees, mobilise a majority, travel round Russia, unite our people, lead an offensive (in answer to the attacks of the Martovists), an offensive against the C.O., a bombardment of resolutions: 1) demanding a congress; 2) *asking* the editors of the C.O. whether they intend to submit to the Congress on the question of the constitution of the editorial board; 3) condemning the new *Iskra* without "philistine tenderness," as was done the other day by Astrakhan, by Tver and by the Urals.** These resolutions must be printed in Russia, we have already said this a hundred times.

I believe our C.C. really consists of bureaucrats and formalists, and not of revolutionaries. The Martovists spit into their ugly mugs, and they only go on wiping their faces and lecturing me, saying: "It is no use fighting." Only bureaucrats can fail to see that the C.C. is not a C.C. and that its fruitless efforts to be one are simply ridiculous. Either the C.C. becomes an organisation for *war against the C.O.*, a war in fact and not in name, a war waged in the committees, or the C.C. is a worthless rag which only deserves to be cast away.

For Christ's sake, will you understand that centralism has been wrecked beyond repair by the Martovists. Cut out all these idiotic formalities, capture the committees, teach *them* to fight for the Party against the circle spirit abroad, write leaflets for them (this will not prevent agitation for the Congress, it will help it), put auxiliary forces on technical work. Be leaders in the war against the C.O. or else give up all comic pretensions to be "leading" others by wiping spittle from your faces.

Clair's behaviour is disgraceful, and Konyagin's encouraging him in it is still worse. Nothing angers me so much as our so-called C.C. *Addio.*

THE OLD MAN.

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK *

THE CRISIS IN OUR PARTY

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

THE CRISIS IN OUR PARTY

PREFACE

WHEN a prolonged, stubborn and fierce struggle has been going on for some time there comes a moment when the central and fundamental points at issue, upon the solution of which the ultimate outcome of the campaign depends, and before which all the minor and petty episodes of the struggle begin to recede into the background, begin to assume definite outline.

That is how the matter stands with regard to the struggle inside our Party that has been riveting the attention of all Party members for the past six months. And precisely because in the present study I have had to allude to many points of detail which are only of infinitesimal interest and to many squabbles which at bottom are of no interest whatever, I should like from the very outset to draw the reader's attention to the two points which are really central and fundamental, which are of tremendous interest, which unquestionably possess historic significance and which are the most essential political questions at issue in our Party.

The first question is that of the political significance of the division of our Party into a "majority" and a "minority" which took shape at the Second Party Congress and which relegated all previous divisions among Russian Social-Democrats far into the background.

The second question is, what significance in principle is to be attached to the position taken up by the new *Iskra** on questions of organisation, in so far as this position is actually one of principle?

The first question is the question of the starting point of the

struggle in our Party, its source, its causes and its fundamental political character. The second question is the question of the ultimate result of the struggle, its *finale*, the sum total of principles that will result from adding up all that is connected with principles and subtracting all that is connected with squabbles. The answer to the first question is obtained by analysing the struggle at the Party Congress; the answer to the second is obtained by analysing what is new in the principles of the new *Iskra*. This twofold analysis, which takes up nine-tenths of my pamphlet, leads to the conclusion that the "majority" is the revolutionary and the "minority," the opportunist wing of our Party; at present the dissensions that divide the two wings are for the most part only questions of organisation, and not of the programme or of tactics; the new system of views of the new *Iskra*—which emerges all the more clearly, the more it tries to deepen its position and the more that position is purged of all these squabbles about co-optation—is opportunism on questions of organisation.

The principal shortcoming of the existing literature on the crisis in our Party, as regards the study and the interpretation of facts, is that the minutes of the Party Congress have practically not been analysed and, as far as the elucidation of fundamental principles on questions of organisation is concerned, that no analysis has been made of the connection which unquestionably exists between the basic error Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod make in their formulation of point 1 of the rules and the defence of that formula, on the one hand, and the whole "system" (in so far as one can speak of a system) of present principles of *Iskra* on the question of organisation, on the other. The present editors of *Iskra* do not seem to notice this connection, although in the writings of the "majority" attention has again and again been drawn to the importance of the dispute over point 1. As a matter of fact, Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov have only been deepening, developing and extending their initial error in connection with point 1. As a matter of fact, the entire position of the opportunists in questions of organisation began to be revealed in the course of the con-

troversy over point 1: their advocacy of a diffuse and loose Party organisation; their hostility to the idea (the "bureaucratic" idea) of building the Party from above, starting from the Party Congress and the bodies emanating from the latter; their tendency to proceed from below, a tendency which would allow every professor, every schoolboy and "every striker" to register himself as a member of the Party; their hostility to the "formalism" which demands that a Party member belong to an organisation recognised by the Party; their inclination towards the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who is only prepared "platonically to recognise organisational relations"; their weakness for opportunist profundity and for anarchist phrases; their partiality for autonomism as against centralism—in a word, all that which has blossomed out so luxuriantly in the new *Iskra*, and is helping more and more to explain, completely and graphically, the initial error.

As for the minutes of the Party Congress, the utterly undeserved lack of attention shown to them can only be accounted for by the way our controversies have been choked by our squabbles, and possibly by the fact that those minutes contain a considerable amount of unpalatable truth. The minutes of the Party Congress present a picture of the actual state of affairs in our Party that is unique and incomparable for precision, completeness, all-sidedness, wealth and authenticity, a picture of views, moods and plans drawn by the participants in the movement themselves, a picture of the political nuances existing inside the Party, showing their relative strength, their mutual relationships and their struggles. It is the minutes of the Party Congress, and only these minutes, that show to what extent we have really succeeded in making a clean sweep of all the survivals of the old circle links and in substituting for them a single great Party link. It is the duty of every Party member who wishes to take an intelligent part in the affairs of our Party to study the Party Congress attentively; I insist on this word "study," because the mere perusal of the heap of raw material contained in the minutes does not give a picture of the Congress. Only by dint of careful and independent study can one

(and must one) reach a stage where the short summaries of the speeches, the dry excerpts from the debates, the petty skirmishes on minor (seemingly minor) issues will combine to form one whole, and enable the Party member to see with his own eyes the living figure of each important speaker and to discern the political complexion of each group of delegates at the Congress. If the writer of these lines succeeds in giving the reader even a slight impetus to undertake an extensive and independent study of the minutes of the Party Congress, he will not regard his work as having been in vain.

One more word to the opponents of Social-Democracy. They gloat and grimace over our controversies; and, of course, they will try to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet, which deals with the defects and shortcomings of our Party, and to use them for their own ends. The Russian Social-Democrats have already been sufficiently steeled in battle not to let themselves be perturbed by these pinpricks and to continue, in spite of them, with their work of self-criticism and of ruthlessly exposing their own shortcomings, which will inevitably and certainly be overcome as the working class movement grows. As for our opponents, let them first attempt to draw a picture of the *true* state of affairs in their own "parties" that would even remotely resemble the one that is revealed by the minutes of our Second Congress.

N. LENIN.

May 1904.

A. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONGRESS

There is a saying that everyone is entitled to curse his judges for twenty-four hours. Like every congress of every party, our Party Congress had to act as judge in respect of certain persons who aspired to leadership but suffered defeat. Today these members of the "minority" are "cursing their judges" with a naiveté that verges on the pathetic, and they are making every effort to discredit the Congress, to minimise its importance and its prestige. This attitude has found what is probably its most vivid expression in the article by "Practical Worker" in No. 57 of *Iskra*, in which the author is "revolted" at the idea of the

sovereign "divinity" of a congress. This is so characteristic a trait of the new *Iskra* that it cannot be ignored. The editors, most of whom are persons who were *rejected* by the Congress, continue on the one hand to call themselves an editorial board of the "Party," while, on the other hand, they accept with open arms those who assert that the Congress is not divine. Nice, is it not? Yes, gentlemen, a congress, of course, is not divine; but what must we think of those who begin to "abuse" a congress *after* they have suffered defeat at this congress?

Indeed, let us recall the main facts of the way the Congress was prepared.

At the very outset, *Iskra*, in its announcement in 1900, which preceded the publication of that paper, declared that we must first separate and then unite. *Iskra* tried to convert the Conference of 1902 into a private meeting and not a Party congress.* In the summer and autumn of 1902 *Iskra* acted with extreme caution when it revived the Organisation Committee that was elected at that conference. At last the work of dividing was finished—as was generally admitted. An Organisation Committee was set up towards the very end of 1902. *Iskra* welcomed its consolidation and, in an *editorial* article in No. 32, declared that the calling of a Party congress was a matter of the *most urgent* and immediate necessity. Hence, the last thing we can be accused of is of having been in too great a hurry in convening the Second Congress. We acted according to the rule: "measure your cloth seven times before cutting"; we had every moral right to believe that our comrades would not start complaining and re-measuring after the thing had been cut.

The Organisation Committee drew up a very elaborate set of standing orders (formalistic and bureaucratic, those would say who now use these words to conceal their political flabbiness) for the Second Congress, got it passed by all the committees and, at last, sanctioned it, one of the provisions being that contained in point 18: "All the decisions of the Congress and all the elections carried out by it are the decisions of the Party and are binding on all the organisations of the Party. They cannot be appealed against by anyone on any pretext and can only be

revoked or modified by the next congress of the Party." These words, which were adopted in silence at the time as something self-evident, look innocent enough by themselves, do they not? But how strange they sound today—like a verdict pronounced against the "minority"! Why was this point included? Was it just for the sake of formality? By no means. The provision seemed necessary, and was in fact necessary, because the Party consisted of a number of isolated and independent groups, which could be expected to refuse to recognise the Congress. This provision expressed the *good will* of all revolutionaries (there is a great deal of irrelevant talk about it today, because the term good is euphemistically applied to what really deserves the epithet capricious). It was equivalent to a *word of honour*, mutually pledged by all Russian Social-Democrats. It was intended as a guarantee that the tremendous labours, dangers and expense entailed by the Congress would not be wasted, and that the Congress would not be turned into a farce. It qualified beforehand every refusal to recognise the decisions of and the elections at the Congress as a *breach of faith*.

Whom, then, is the new *Iskra* holding up to ridicule when it makes the discovery that the Congress is not divine and its decisions not sacred? Does this discovery imply "new views on organisation" or only new attempts to cover up old tracks?

B. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VARIOUS GROUPS AT THE CONGRESS

Thus, the Congress was called after very careful preparation had been made and on the basis of complete representation. It was generally recognised that the Congress as constituted was valid and that its decisions were *absolutely* binding; and this recognition was voiced in a statement of the chairman * (Minutes, p. 54) after the Congress had constituted itself.

What was the principal task of the Congress? It was to create a *real* party on the basis of the principles and methods of organisation that had been advocated and elaborated by *Iskra*. That this was the direction in which the Congress had to work had been predetermined by *Iskra's* three years of effort and by the fact that this work had won the recognition of most of the com-

mittees. *Iskra's* programme and policy were to become the programme and policy of the Party; *Iskra's* organisational plans were to materialise in the rules on organisation of the Party. But needless to say, this result could not be obtained without a fight: the completely representative character of the Congress secured the presence of organisations which had definitely fought *Iskra* (the Bund and *Rabocheye Dyelo*) and of organisations which, although they nominally recognised *Iskra* as the leading organ, in actual fact pursued plans of their own and were distinguished by a lack of steadiness in matters of principle (the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group and several committee delegates who adhered to it). In these circumstances the Congress could not avoid becoming a field of battle for the victory of the "*Iskra*"-ist cause. That the Congress did actually become such a field of battle will at once be clear to anyone who reads the minutes at all attentively. Our present task is to trace in detail the principal groups that were formed on the various issues at the Congress and to reconstruct, with the aid of the precise evidence of the minutes, the political complexion of each of the main groups. What precisely did those groups, those shades of opinion and those tendencies that were going to unite in one party at the Congress under the leadership of *Iskra* stand for? This is the question we must answer by analysing the debates and votes. The elucidation of this point is of cardinal importance if we wish to know what our Social-Democrats really are and if we wish to understand the causes of the dissensions in their midst. That is why, when I spoke at the League, as well as in the letter I wrote to the editors of the new *Iskra*, I insisted above all on the analysis of the various groups. My opponents, the representatives of the "minority" (and Martov at their head), utterly failed to understand the essence of the question. At the Congress of the League they confined themselves to rectifications of detail, trying to "defend" themselves against the charge raised against them that they were heading towards opportunism; but they made no attempt to draw any other picture of the groups at the Congress in opposition to mine. Since then Martov has attempted in *Iskra* (No. 56) to represent all the attempts clearly to delimit the

various political groups at the Congress as mere "circle politics." That is strong language, Comrade Martov! But in the new *Iskra* strong words are all marked by one peculiar feature: it is enough to reproduce all the stages of the divergence, from the Congress onwards, for all these strong words to be turned *completely and primarily* against the present editors. Look at yourselves, gentlemen, you so-called Party editors who want to talk about circle politics!

Martov finds the facts of our struggle at the Congress so unpleasant that he tries to slur over them altogether. "An *Iskra*-ist," he says, "is one who, at the Party Congress and before it, expressed his complete solidarity with *Iskra*, advocated its programme and its views on organisation and supported its organisational policy. There were over forty *Iskra*-ists answering to this description at the Congress—for that was the number of votes given for *Iskra*'s programme and for the resolution recognising *Iskra* as the central organ of the Party." If you look into the minutes of the Congress you will see that the programme was accepted by *all* votes (p. 233), except Akimov who abstained. Thus, Comrade Martov wants to convince us that the Bundists and Brooker and Martynov *proved* their complete solidarity with *Iskra* and *defended* its organisational views. This is ridiculous. The fact that *after* the Congress *all* those who attended it became equal members of the Party (and even then not all, for the Bundists withdrew) is confused with the alignment of groups that was the cause of the struggle *at* the Congress. The official phrase, "recognised the programme," is thus substituted for a study of the *elements* that comprised the "majority" and the "minority" after the Congress.

Take the voting on the question of recognising *Iskra* as the central organ. You will see that it was none other than Martynov—whom Comrade Martov, with a courage worthy of a better cause, describes as supporting *Iskra*'s organisational views and organisational policy—who insisted on dividing the resolution into two parts, the bare recognition of *Iskra* as the central organ and the recognition of its services. When the first part of the resolution was put to the vote (recognition of the services

of *Iskra*, expressing *solidarity* with it) there were *only thirty-five votes* in favour; two voted against (Akimov and Brooker), while eleven abstained (Martynov, the five Bundists and the five votes of the editors: Martov and I with two votes each and Plekhanov with one). Even this case, which is most advantageous for Martov's views and which he chose himself, reveals quite clearly the nature of the anti-*Iskra* group (five Bundists, three *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists). Now take the voting for the second part of the resolution—the recognition of *Iskra* as the central organ without giving reasons and without any expression of solidarity (Minutes, p. 147): forty-four votes in favour, all of which Martov now ascribes to the *Iskra*-ists. The total number of votes was fifty-one; subtracting the five votes of the editors who abstained, we get forty-six; two voted *against* (Akimov and Brooker); consequently, the remaining forty-four include *the five Bundists*. Hence, at the Congress, the Bundists “expressed complete solidarity with *Iskra*”—thus is official history written by the official *Iskra*! Let us anticipate a little and explain to the reader the real reasons for this official version of the truth: the present editorial board of *Iskra* could have become and would have become a Party editorial board in reality (and not a quasi-Party editorial board, as it is today) *had the Bundists and “Rabocheye Dyelo”-ists not left the Congress*; that is why these most trusty guardians of the present, so-called Party editorial board had to be described as *Iskra*-ists. But I shall return to this point further on in greater detail.

The next question is this: if the struggle at the Congress was between *Iskra*-ists and anti-*Iskra*-ists, were there no intermediate, unstable elements that vacillated between the two sides? Anyone who is at all familiar with our Party and with the usual complexion of all congresses would be inclined *a priori* to answer the question in the affirmative. Comrade Martov does not like to be reminded of these unstable elements, so he presents the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group and the delegates who gravitated towards it as typical *Iskra*-ists, and our differences with them as slight and unimportant. Fortunately, we have before us the complete text of the minutes and we are in a position to answer

the question, which is of course a question of fact, on the basis of documentary evidence. What we have said of the general grouping at the Congress does not, of course, pretend to solve the problem, but only to formulate it correctly.

Until we have analysed the political groups, until we have obtained a picture of the Congress as a struggle between definite political shades, nothing can be understood about our differences. Martov's attempt to slur over the difference in political shades by ranking even the Bundists with the *Iskra*-ists is merely an evasion of the question. Even *a priori*, starting from the history of Russian Social-Democracy before the Congress, three main groups stand out for subsequent verification and detailed study: the *Iskra*-ists, the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the unstable, vacillating, wavering elements.¹

N. GENERAL VIEW OF THE STRUGGLE AT THE CONGRESS

The Revolutionary and the Opportunist Wings of the Party

Now that we have finished analysing the debates and the votes of the Congress, we must sum up, so that, on the basis of the *whole* of the Congress material, we may answer the question: what elements, groups and shades comprised the majority and the minority in the final form in which they appeared at the elections and which was to become, for a time, the main division in the Party? We must sum up all the evidence on the various shades of opinion concerning matters of principle, theory and tactics with which the minutes of the Congress provide us in such abundance. Without a general "summary," without a general picture of the Congress as a whole, and of all its principal groups at the voting, these data remain too disjointed, too disconnected, so that at first sight the grouping appears to be accidental, especially to one who does not take the trouble to *study* the minutes of the Congress (and how many readers have taken the trouble to do so?).

In English parliamentary reports we often find the characteristic word "division." The House "divided" into such and such

¹ Sections C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M and appendix are omitted from this edition.—*Ed.*

a majority and minority—is the expression used in speaking of taking a vote on an issue. The “division” of our Social-Democratic House on the various issues discussed at the Congress presents a picture of the struggle inside the Party, of its shades of opinion and groups, that is *unique and incomparable for its completeness and precision*. To make the picture more striking, to obtain a real *picture*, instead of a heap of disconnected, disjointed and isolated facts, to put an end to the endless and senseless controversies over separate divisions (who voted for whom and who supported whom), I have decided to try to represent *all the basic types* of “division” at our Congress in the form of a *diagram*. This at first will probably seem strange to very many people, but I doubt whether there is any better method that would really generalise and sum up the results in the most complete and accurate way possible. In all cases when the votes were taken by roll call, it can be determined with complete accuracy whether a given delegate voted for or against a given motion; likewise, in certain important cases when the vote was not taken by roll call, the minutes enable us to answer the question with a very great degree of probability, with a sufficient degree of approximation to the truth. If, at the same time, we take into account *all* the divisions by roll call and all the other divisions on issues of any importance (which can be measured by the length and heatedness of the debates), we shall obtain a picture of the struggle inside our Party that will be as objective as is obtainable with the material at our disposal. In doing this, instead of trying to give a photographic representation, *i.e.*, instead of representing every division separately, we shall try to give a picture, *i.e.*, to present all the main *types* of division, and leave out relatively unimportant exceptions and variations which would only serve to confuse the matter. In any case, with the aid of the minutes it will be possible for anyone to check every detail of our picture, to fill it in with individual divisions, in a word, to criticise it not only by arguing, expressing doubt and picking out isolated cases, but by drawing up a *different picture* with the aid of the same material.

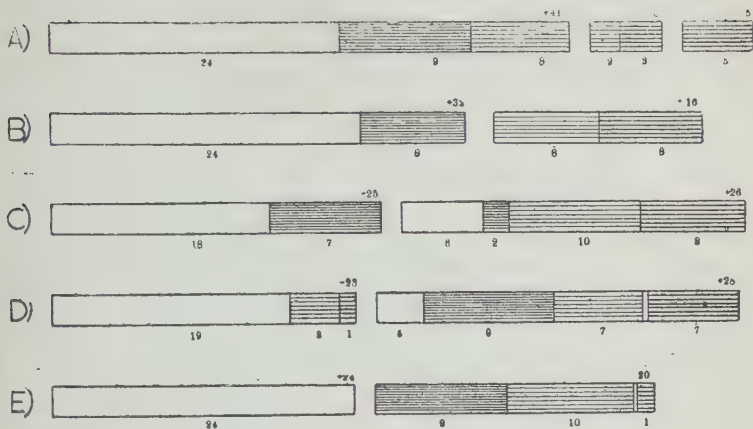
In marking on the diagram every delegate who took part in

a division we shall indicate by a special shading the four main groups which we have traced in detail throughout the course of the debates at the Congress, *viz.*,: 1) *Iskra*-ists of the majority; 2) *Iskra*-ists of the minority; 3) centre, and 4) anti-*Iskra*-ists. We have seen that in a number of instances these groups were distinguished by shades of difference in matters of principle, and if anyone objects to the name given to each group, which reminds the zigzag lovers too much of *Iskra* and of *Iskra's* line of policy, we shall remark that it is not the name that matters. Now that the shades of opinion have been traced through *all* the debates at the Congress it is easy to substitute for the Party nicknames that have become established and familiar (but which jar on the ears of certain people) a description of the *essential differences between the groups*. This substitution would result in the following names for the same four groups: 1) consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats; 2) minor opportunists; 3) middling opportunists, and 4) major opportunists (major, according to our Russian standards). Let us hope that these names will be less shocking to those who for some time have been trying to convince themselves and others that *Iskra*-ist is a name denoting only a "circle" and not a *line of policy*.

We shall now proceed to explain in detail the types of division that have been "marked" on this diagram. [See page 419.]

The first type of division (A) covers cases when the centre voted with the *Iskra*-ists against the anti-*Iskra*-ists or against a section of the latter. It includes the division on the programme as a whole (Comrade Akimov alone abstained, all the others voted in favour); the division on the resolution condemning federation in principle (all in favour, except the five Bundists); the vote on point 2 of the rules of the Bund (against us the five Bundists; five abstentions, *viz.*: Martynov, Akimov, Brooker and Makhov, the latter with two votes; the rest were with us); *it is this latter division that is represented in the diagram under A*. There were *three* more divisions of the same type on the question of endorsing *Iskra* as the central organ of the Party, the editors (five votes) abstaining; in all three divisions two voted against (Akimov and Brooker) and, in addition, when the vote on *rea-*

GENERAL PICTURE OF THE STRUGGLE AT THE CONGRESS



The figures with + and - indicate the total number of votes given on a certain issue *for* and *against*. The figures below the strips indicate the number of votes each of the four groups held. The sort of division covered by each of the types from A to E is explained in the text.

NAME OF GROUP	
	Iskra-ists of majority
	Iskra-ists of minority
	Centre
	Anti-Iskra-ists

sons for endorsing *Iskra* was taken the Bundists and Comrade Martynov abstained.¹

This type of division provides an answer to the very interesting and important question, *viz.*, in which cases did the "centre" vote with the *Iskra*-ists? Either when *even the anti-"Iskra"-ists*, with a few exceptions, *were with us* (recognition of the programme, endorsement of *Iskra* irrespective of motives), or else when the issue was a *statement* that by itself did not yet commit one to a definite political position (the recognition of the

¹ Why did I take the vote on point 2 of the rules of the Bund as an illustration for the diagram? Because the votes on the question of endorsing *Iskra* were less complete, while the votes on the programme and on the question of federation refer to political decisions of a less concretely defined character. Speaking generally, the choice of one of a number of divisions of the same type will not in the least affect the essential features of the picture, as anyone may easily be convinced after making the necessary changes.

organising work of *Iskra* does not yet commit one to carrying out its organisational policy in respect of every given group; the rejection of the principle of federation does not prevent one from abstaining when the issue is a concrete scheme of federation, as we have seen in the case of Comrade Makhov). When speaking of the groups at the Congress in general, we saw how false was the impression given in the official *Iskra* account which (with Comrade Martov for its spokesman) *blurs and glosses over* the difference between the *Iskra*-ists and the "centre," between the consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats and the opportunists, by quoting cases when the anti-"*Iskra*"-ists were with us! Even the most "Right-wing" of the German and French opportunists in the Social-Democratic Parties never vote against such points as the *recognition of the programme as a whole*.

The second type of division (B) covers those cases when the consistent and the inconsistent *Iskra*-ists voted together against all the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the whole "centre." In those cases the issue, for the most part, was whether to carry out the definite concrete plans of the *Iskra* policy, whether to endorse *Iskra in deeds and not only in words*. These cases include the O.C. incident¹; whether to put the question of the position of the Bund in the Party as the first item on the agenda; the dissolution of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group; two divisions on the agrarian programme, and, finally, sixth, voting *against* the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad (*Rabocheye Dyelo*), i.e., the recognition of the League² as the only Party organisation outside

¹ It is this division that is reproduced in diagram B: the *Iskra*-ists had thirty-two votes, sixteen voted for the Bund resolution. It may be pointed out that none of the divisions of this type were *by roll call*. The way the individual delegates voted can only be established with a very great degree of probability by two sets of evidence: 1) in the debate the speakers of both *Iskra* sections spoke in favour, those of the anti-*Iskra*-ists and of the centre—against; 2) the number of votes in favour was always very close to the figure 33. It must not be forgotten that when we analysed the debates at the Congress we pointed out a number of cases, besides divisions, when the "centre" voted with the anti-*Iskra*-ists (with the opportunists) against us. Such cases were: the question of the absolute value of democratic demands, of supporting the opposition elements, of limiting centralism, etc.

² The League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

Russia. In cases like these the old, pre-Party circle spirit, the interests of the opportunist organisations and of little groups, a narrow interpretation of Marxism were set up against the steady, principled and consistent policy of revolutionary Social-Democracy; the *Iskra*-ists of the minority were with us in a number of cases, in a number of exceedingly important divisions (important from the point of view of the O.C., of *Yuzhny Rabochy* and of *Rabocheye Dyelo*)—until it came to *their own* circle spirit, to their own inconsistencies. The “divisions” of this type make it clear that in a number of issues that related to the practical application of our principles, *the centre voted with the anti-“Iskra”-ists*, thus showing itself to be much more akin to them than to us, much more inclined *in practice* towards the *opportunist* than towards the *revolutionary* wing of Social-Democracy. These *Iskra*-ists, who are *Iskra*-ists *in name*, but are ashamed to be *Iskra*-ists, revealed their true nature; the struggle that inevitably ensued introduced much irritation, which often obscured from the less thoughtful and more impressionable the significance of the shades of principle that were revealed in the course of the struggle. But now that the ardour of battle has subsided and the minutes remain as the objective extract of a succession of heated battles, only those who shut their eyes can fail to see that the alliance of the Makhovs and Egorovs with the Akimovs and Liebers was not, and could not be, accidental. The only thing Martov and Axelrod can do is to avoid making an all-round and precise analysis of the minutes, or to try to *undo* their behaviour at the Congress by all sorts of expressions of *regret*. As if regrets can remove differences of views or differences of policy! As if the present alliance of Martov and Axelrod with Akimov, Brooker and Martynov can compel our Party, which was restored at the Second Congress, to forget the struggle the *Iskra*-ists waged against the anti-*Iskra*-ists practically the whole time the Congress sat!

The third type of division at the Congress, corresponding to the three remaining parts of the diagram (C, D and E), is characterised by the fact that *a small section of the “Iskra”-ists broke away and went over to the anti-“Iskra”-ists*, which gave the latter

(as long as they remained at the Congress) a majority. In order that we may, with complete accuracy, trace the development of this celebrated *coalition* of the *Iskra*-ist minority with the anti-*Iskra*-ists, the bare mention of which at the Congress drove Martov to writing hysterical epistles, we have reproduced all the three main types of division *by roll call*. C is the division 'on the question of the equal status of languages (the last of the three divisions by roll call on this issue is reproduced, as being the most complete). All the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the whole centre stood solid against us, while the seceding *Iskra*-ists included a section of the majority and a section of the minority. *It had not yet become clear which of the "Iskra"-ists were capable of forming a definite and stable coalition with the opportunist "Right wing" of the Congress.* Next comes type D division, the division on point 1 of the rules (the division here reproduced is that one of the two divisions which was more clear cut, there being no abstentions). *The coalition becomes more distinct and more consolidated*¹: all the *Iskra*-ists of the minority are now on the side of Akimov and Lieber, but only a very small number of *Iskra*-ists of the majority, the latter counterbalancing the adherence to our side of three delegates of the "centre" and one anti-*Iskra*-ist. A glance at the diagram will show which elements shifted accidentally and temporarily from side to side and *which were drawn with irresistible force towards a lasting coalition with Akimov.* The last division (E—elections to the C.O., the C.C. and the Council of the Party), *which presents the final division into a majority and a minority*, clearly shows the complete fusion of the *Iskra*-ist minority with the *whole* of the "centre" and with the *remnants* of the anti-*Iskra*-ists. By this time, of the eight anti-*Iskra*-ists Comrade Brooker alone re-

¹ Everything points to the fact that four of the divisions on the rules were of the same type: (p. 278) 27 for Fomin, against 21 for us; (p. 279) 26 for Martov, against 24 for us; (p. 280) 27 against myself, 22 for Martov and, on the same page, 24 for Martov, against 23 for us. These are the divisions, already dealt with, on the question of co-optation to the centres. The divisions were not by roll call (one was, but the record of it has been lost). The Bundists (all or some) apparently came to the rescue of Martov. Martov's erroneous statements (at the League) concerning these divisions have been corrected above.

mained at the Congress (Comrade Akimov explained his mistake to him and he took his proper place in the *Martovist* ranks). The withdrawal of the seven most "*Right*" *opportunists* decided the issue of the elections against Martov.¹

And now with the aid of the objective evidence of divisions of *every type*, let us sum up the results of the Congress.

There has been much talk about the "*accidental*" character of the majority at our Congress. The diagram clearly shows that in *a certain sense*, but only in that sense, the majority may be called accidental, *viz.*, in the sense that the withdrawal of the seven most opportunist delegates of the "*Right wing*" was *accidental*. To the extent that this withdrawal was accidental, *to that extent* (but no more) our majority was also accidental. A glance at the diagram will show better than long arguments on whose side those seven would have been and *ought to have been*.² But the question must be asked: how far was the withdrawal of these seven accidental? This is the question that those who talk freely about the accidental character of the majority do not like to ask themselves. Certainly, the question is a very unpleasant one for them. Was it an accident that the most ardent representatives of the *Right wing* and not the *Left wing* of our Party withdrew? Was it an accident that the *opportunists* withdrew, and not the consistent *revolutionary Social-Democrats*? Is this "*accidental*" withdrawal in any way connected with the struggle against the opportunist wing which was carried on the whole time the Congress was in session, and which our diagram so strikingly illustrates?

It is sufficient to ask these questions, which are unpleasant for the minority, to realise what fact all this talk about the acci-

¹ The seven opportunists who withdrew from the Second Congress were the five Bundists (the Bund withdrew from the Party after the principle of federation had been rejected by the Congress) and the two *Rabocheye Dyelo* delegates, Comrade Martynov and Comrade Akimov. These latter left the Congress after the *Iskra*-ist League had been recognised as the *only* Party organisation abroad, *i.e.*, after the *Rabocheye Dyelo* League of Russian Social Democrats had been dissolved.

² We shall see further on that *after* the Congress both Comrade Akimov and the Voronezh Committee, which is most *akin* to Akimov, expressed in so many words their sympathy with the "*minority*."

dental character of the majority is intended to *conceal*. It is the unquestionable and incontrovertible fact that *the minority was composed of those members of our Party who are most inclined towards opportunism*. The elements that comprised the minority were those that *were least steady in theory, least stable in matters of principle*. It was from the *Right wing* of the Party that the minority was formed. The division into a majority and a minority is the direct and inevitable continuation of that division of Social-Democracy into a revolutionary wing and opportunist wing, into a Mountain and a Gironde, which made its appearance, not yesterday, and not only in the Russian working class party, and which, no doubt, will not disappear tomorrow.

This fact is of cardinal importance if we want to bring to light the causes and the stages of the disagreements. To try to *evade* the fact by denying or glossing over the struggle at the Congress and the shades of principle that emerged in the course of it—is to give oneself a testimonial of complete intellectual and political poverty. In order to *disprove* the fact, it would have to be shown, *in the first place*, that the general picture of votes and “divisions” at our Party Congress was different from the one I have drawn; and, *in the second place*, it would have to be shown that it was the most consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats, those who in Russia have become associated with the name of *Iskra*, who *were in the wrong in essence* on the issues on which the Congress “divided.” Try to prove that, gentlemen!

Incidentally, the fact that the minority consisted of the most opportunist, the least steady and least consistent elements in the Party provides an answer to those numerous perplexities and objections that are addressed to the majority by those who are imperfectly acquainted with the matter, or have not given it sufficient thought. Is it not shallow, we are told, to account for the disagreements by a minor mistake of Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod? Granted, Comrade Martov’s mistake was small (and I said this even at the Congress, in the heat of the struggle), but this little mistake *could* have caused (and has caused)

a lot of harm, because delegates who had made a *number of mistakes* and manifested an inclination towards opportunism and unsteadiness of principle on a number of questions drew Comrade Martov over to their side. That Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod should have shown unsteadiness was an individual and unimportant fact, but what was no longer an individual, but a *Party* fact, and a fact *by no means unimportant*, was the formation of a very considerable minority that included *all* the least steady elements, *all those* who either entirely rejected *Iskra's* line of policy and openly opposed it, or who, while doing lip-service to it, were in practice constantly on the side of the anti-*Iskra*-ists.

Is it not absurd to *account for* the disagreement by the fact that a hardened circle spirit and revolutionary philistinism reigned in the small group comprising the original editors of *Iskra*? No, it is not absurd, because *all those in our Party* who during the whole Congress had fought *for every kind of circle spirit*, all those *who were incapable of rising above* revolutionary philistinism, all those who appealed to the "historic" character of the evil of philistinism and the circle spirit in order to justify and preserve the evil—all rose in support of *this individual* circle spirit. The fact that narrow circle interests got the better of the Party spirit in the one little circle of the editors of *Iskra* may, perhaps, be regarded as accidental; but it was not an accident that this circle spirit received the staunch support of the Akimovs and the Brookers, who attached no less (if not more) value to the "historical continuity" of the famous Voronezh Committee* and the famous "workers'" organisation in St. Petersburg;¹ that it received the support of the Egorovs, who were lamenting the "murder" of *Rabocheye Dyelo* as loudly (if not more so) as the "murder" of the old editorial board; that it received the support of the Makhovs, etc., etc. The old proverb says: "Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you what you are." Tell me who your political ally is, who votes for you—and I will tell you what your *political complexion is*.

¹ See note to page 341.***—Ed.

The minor mistake committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod was, and might have remained, a *minor* one as long as it did not serve as the starting point for their *permanent alliance* with the whole opportunist wing of our Party, as long as it did not lead, as a result of this alliance, to a *recrudescence* of opportunism, to a desire for *revanche* on the part of all those whom *Iskra* had fought and who were overjoyed at the opportunity of *venting their spite* on the consistent adherents of revolutionary Social-Democracy. The events after the Congress have led to an actual recrudescence of opportunism in the new *Iskra*, to the *revanche* of the Akimovs and Brookers (see the leaflet issued by the Voronezh Committee), to the ecstasies of the Martynovs who have at long last (at long last!) been allowed, in the hated *Iskra*, to kick the hated enemy for all former grievances. This makes it particularly clear how important it was to "restore the old editorial board of *Iskra*" (quoted from Comrade Starover's ultimatum of November 16 [3], 1903) in order to preserve *Iskra*-ist "continuity. . . ."

Taken by itself, there was nothing alarming and nothing critical, not even anything abnormal, in the fact that the Congress (and the Party) divided into a Left and a Right, into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing. On the contrary, the preceding ten years in the history of Russian (and not only of Russian) Social-Democracy had been inevitably and inescapably leading up to such a division. The fact that it was a number of very *minor* errors of the Right wing, of very unimportant (relatively) dissensions that caused the division (which seems shocking to the superficial observer and to the philistine mind), marked *a great step forward for our Party as a whole*. Formerly we had dissensions on major issues which were at times sufficient to justify a split; now we have agreed on all major and important points, and we are only divided by *shades* of opinion, about which we may *and must* argue, but on which it would be absurd and puerile to part company (as Comrade Plekhanov has quite rightly said in his interesting article "What Should Not Be Done?"* which we shall have to return to). Now that the *anarchistic behaviour* of the minor-

ity *after the Congress* has nearly led to a split in the Party, we often hear wiseacres saying: was it worth fighting at the Congress over such petty things as the O.C. incident, the dissolution of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group, over *Rabocheye Dyelo*, point 1, the dissolution of the old editorial board, etc.? Those who reason in this way introduce the circle point of view in Party affairs: the struggle between *shades* of opinion inside the Party is *unavoidable and necessary* as long as it does not lead to anarchy and to a split, as long as it is carried on *within the bounds* approved by the common consent of all comrades and Party members. *Our struggle* against the Right wing of the Party *at the Congress*, against Akimov and Axelrod, against Martynov and Martov, *never passed beyond these bounds*. It is sufficient to recall two facts which testify to this in the most incontrovertible way: 1) when Martynov and Akimov were about to leave the Congress *we were all prepared* to do everything to disclaim all idea of wanting to "insult" anyone, *we were all ready to accept* (thirty-two votes) the resolution proposed by Comrade Trotsky, which invited these comrades to accept these explanations as satisfactory and to withdraw their statement; 2) when it came to the election of the centres, we were ready to give the minority (or the opportunist wing) of the Congress *a minority in both the centres*: to Martov on the C.O., to Popov on the C.C. *We were unable* to act otherwise from the Party point of view, since we had decided before the Congress to elect two groups of three. *The difference in the shades of opinion that was manifested at the Congress was not great*, but neither was the *practical* conclusion which we drew from the struggle between these two shades of opinion: the conclusion amounted to this, and *no more than this*, that the *majority* of the Party Congress should be given *two-thirds* of the seats in both centres.

It was only the *refusal* of the minority at the Party Congress to be a *minority in the centres* that led first to the "sloppy whimpering" of the defeated intellectuals, and after that to *anarchist phrases* and anarchist action.

In conclusion, we shall glance once again at the diagram

from the point of view of the constitution of the centres. Naturally, during the elections, in addition to the question of shades of opinion, the delegates were also faced with the question of the *suitability*, efficiency, etc., of a given *person*. Now the minority is very fond of confusing these questions. That these are two different questions is self-evident and may be seen, for instance, from the simple fact that the choice of the *original* group of three for the C.O. had been made *before the Congress*, at a time when no one could have foreseen the alliance of Martov and Axelrod with Martynov and Akimov. Different questions have to be answered in different ways: the answer to the question of shades of opinion must be sought for in the *minutes of the Congress*, in the *open* discussion and the divisions on all the various issues. As to the question of the suitability of *persons* it was decided to settle it at the Congress by *secret ballot*. Why did the *Congress unanimously* take that decision? The question is so elementary that it would be odd to dwell on it. But since their defeat at the ballot box, the minority have been forgetting even their A B C. We have heard torrents of ardent, passionate speeches, heated almost to the point of irresponsibility, in defence of the old editorial board, but we have heard *absolutely nothing* about the shades of opinion *at the Congress*, which are connected with the struggle for a group of six or a group of three. We have heard talk and stories from every corner about the inefficiency, the unsuitability, the evil intentions, etc., of the persons elected to the C.C., but we have heard *absolutely nothing* about the shades of opinion which fought for the control of the C.C. *at the Congress*. I think it is indecent and unworthy to go about talking and telling stories *outside the Congress* about the qualities and the actions of individuals (because in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred these actions are an organisational secret, which can only be disclosed to the supreme institution of the Party). I am convinced that carrying on the fight *outside the Congress* by means of *stories like these* would mean behaving like *scandal-mongers*. And the only public reply I could make to all this talk would be to refer them to the struggle at the Con-

gress: you say that the C.C. was elected by a narrow majority. That is true. But this narrow majority consisted of all those who really fought for the fulfilment of the *Iskra* plans most consistently. Consequently, the *moral* prestige of a majority like that must be incomparably higher than its *formal* prestige—higher in the eyes of all those who value the continuity of *Iskra's line of policy* above the continuity of any *Iskra circle*. Who was *most competent to judge* the suitability of a given person for carrying out the *Iskra* policy? Was it those who supported that policy at the Congress, or those who in a number of cases opposed that policy and defended everything that was obsolete, every kind of rubbish, every kind of circle spirit?¹

Q. THE NEW "ISKRA"

Opportunism in Questions of Organization

In analysing the position of principle taken up by the new *Iskra* we must unquestionably take as our basis the two feuillets of Comrade Axelrod. We have already shown in detail the concrete meaning of some of his favourite catchwords²; we must now try to abstract ourselves from this concrete meaning, look a little more closely at the line of thought that forced the "minority" (on every minor and petty occasion) to arrive at precisely these rather than at any other slogans, and to consider the essential meaning of these slogans apart from their genesis, apart from the question of "co-optation." Compliancy is the fashion today, so let us comply with Comrade Axelrod and take his theory seriously.

Comrade Axelrod's main contention (*Iskra*, No. 57) is that "from the very outset our movement harboured two opposite tendencies the mutual antagonism of which could not fail to grow and to affect the movement parallel with the latter's own development." Namely: "the proletarian object of the move-

¹ Sections O and P are omitted in this edition.—*Ed.*

² The "concrete meaning" refers to the struggle at and after the Congress which developed round the issue of the personnel of the centres; the account of this struggle has been left out of the present edition.—*Ed.*

ment (in Russia) is the same in principle as that of Western Social-Democracy"; but in our country the masses of the workers are influenced "by a social element alien to them"—the radical intelligentsia. So Comrade Axelrod establishes an antagonism between the proletarian and the radical-intellectual trends in our Party.

In this Comrade Axelrod is quite right. This antagonism certainly exists (and not in the Russian Social-Democratic Party alone). Moreover, everyone knows that it is very largely this antagonism that accounts for the division of contemporary Russian Social-Democracy into a revolutionary (orthodox) and an opportunist (revisionist, ministerialist, reformist) wing, which has become fully apparent even in Russia during the past ten years of our movement. Everyone knows also that it is the proletarian trend of the movement that is expressed by orthodox Social-Democracy and that the democratic-intellectual trend is expressed by opportunist Social-Democracy.

But when he comes quite close to this piece of common knowledge, Comrade Axelrod shies and begins to back away from it. He does not make *the slightest attempt* to analyse the way in which this division has manifested itself in the history of Russian Social-Democracy, and more particularly at our Congress, although it is about the Congress that Comrade Axelrod is writing! Like all the editors of the new *Iskra*, Comrade Axelrod displays *mortal fear* of the minutes of this Congress. After all we have said, this need not astonish us, but in a "theoretician" who pretends to be investigating the different trends in our movement it is certainly a queer case of *truth shyness*. And because of this, pushing aside very up-to-date and very accurate material on the trends in our movement, Comrade Axelrod seeks salvation in the sphere of pleasant phantasies. He writes: "Did not legal or semi-Marxism provide our liberals with a literary leader?¹ Why should not history in her frolics provide revolutionary bourgeois-democracy with a leader from the school of orthodox, revolutionary Marxism?" All we can say about this phantasy, which Comrade Axelrod finds

¹ I.e., Peter Struve.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

so pleasant, is that if history is occasionally frolicsome, it does not justify *mental frolics* on the part of those who undertake to analyse history. When the liberal peeped from under the cloak of the leader of semi-Marxism, those who wished (*and were able*) to trace his "trends" did not invoke the possible frolics of history, but tens and hundreds of instances of the mentality and of the logic of that leader and the peculiarities of his literary complexion which revealed him to be nothing more than a reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature. And if after having undertaken to analyse "the general revolutionary and proletarian trends in our movement" Comrade Axelrod was unable to produce a *single argument, not the tiniest bit of an argument* or shred of evidence, to prove the presence of certain trends among certain representatives of the orthodox wing of the Party whom he detests so much, it only shows that he has given himself a *formal testimonial of poverty*. Comrade Axelrod's case must, indeed, be a bad one, if he is reduced to invoking the possible frolics of history.

Comrade Axelrod's other allusion—to the "Jacobins"—is still more instructive. Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the division of modern Social-Democracy into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing has long been the occasion—and not in Russia alone—for "historical analogies drawn from the age of the Great French Revolution." Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that everywhere the *Girondists of contemporary Social-Democracy* have always used such terms as Jacobinism and Blanquism to describe their opponents. We shall not imitate Comrade Axelrod's truth shyness; we shall refer to the minutes of our Congress to see whether they contain any material for analysing and testing the trends we are discussing and the analogies we are considering.

First example. Debate on the programme at the Party Congress. Comrade Akimov ("fully endorsing" Comrade Martynov) made the statement: "the clause concerning the capture of political power [the dictatorship of the proletariat] has been formulated in such a way that, if compared with the programmes of all the other Social-Democratic Parties, it may

be interpreted, and has been interpreted by Plekhanov, as meaning that the role of the leaders of the organisation will relegate the class they are leading to the background and separate the former from the latter. Consequently, we have formulated our political tasks in exactly the same way as was done by *Narodnaya Volya*." (Minutes, p. 124.) Comrade Plekhanov and other *Iskra*-ists reply to Comrade Akimov, and accuse him of opportunism. Does not Comrade Axelrod think that this debate shows us (by actual facts, and not by the imaginary frolics of history) the antagonism between the *modern Jacobins* and *Girondists* in Social-Democracy? And did not Comrade Axelrod begin talking about Jacobins because (owing to the mistakes he committed) he found himself in the company of the *Girondists* of Social-Democracy?

Second example. Comrade Posadovsky raises the point that there is a "grave difference" on the "fundamental issue" of "the absolute value of democratic principles." (P. 169.) Together with Plekhanov he denies that their value is absolute. The leaders of the "centre" or Marsh (Egorov) and of the anti-*Iskra*-ists (Goldblatt) vigorously oppose this view and discover in Plekhanov's attitude an "imitation of bourgeois tactics." (P. 170.) *This is precisely Comrade Axelrod's notion of the connection between orthodoxy and bourgeois trends*, the only difference being that Axelrod leaves it hanging in the air, while Goldblatt linked it up with a definite discussion. Once again we ask the question: does not Comrade Axelrod think that this debate makes the antagonism between the Jacobins and the Girondists of Social-Democracy at our Party Congress *obvious*? Has not Comrade Axelrod raised this outcry against the Jacobins because he found himself in the company of the Girondists?

Third example. Debate on point 1 of the rules. Who defends "*the proletarian trend in our movement*"? Who emphasises the point that the worker is not afraid of organisation, that the proletarian has no sympathy with anarchy, that he values the watchword "organise!"? Who utters the warning against the bourgeois intelligentsia, which is permeated with

opportunism? *The Jacobins of Social-Democracy*. And who tries to drag the radical intellectuals into the Party? Who is concerned about professors and high-school students, about lone members, about the radical youth? *The Girondist Axelrod together with the Girondist Lieber*.

Comrade Axelrod does not defend himself very cleverly against the "false charge of opportunism" that was openly brought against the majority of the "Emancipation of Labour" group at the Congress. His defence is such that he confirms the charge, by harping on the hackneyed Bernsteinian melody of Jacobinism, Blanquism and so on! He raises an outcry about the menace of the radical intelligentsia in order to deafen his own speeches at the Party Congress in which he expressed concern for that very intelligentsia.

All these "dreadful catchwords" about Jacobinism and the rest express absolutely nothing more than *opportunism*. A Jacobin who is inseparably linked with the *organisation* of the proletariat which is *conscious* of its class interests, is a *revolutionary Social-Democrat*. A Girondist, longing for professors and high-school boys, afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat and sighing about the absolute value of democratic demands, is an *opportunist*. It is only opportunists who can still be of the opinion that conspirative organisations are a danger at a time when the idea of narrowing the political fight down to a conspiracy has been refuted thousands of times in literature, has been refuted and crowded out by life, when the cardinal importance of mass political agitation has been made clear and chewed over to the point of nausea. The real source of this fear of conspiracy, of Blanquism, is not to be found in any feature that may have revealed itself in the practical movement (as Bernstein and Co. have long and vainly been trying to show), but in the Girondist timidity of the bourgeois intellectual whose mentality is so often revealed among the Social-Democrats of today. Nothing can be more comical than these efforts of the new *Iskra* to utter a *new word* (that has been uttered hundreds of times) of warning against the tactics of the French revolutionary conspirators of the 'forties and 'six-

ties.* (No. 62, leading article.) In the next number of *Iskra*, the Girondists of contemporary Social-Democracy will probably point out to us a group of French conspirators of the 'forties for whom the importance of political agitation among the working masses, the importance of the workers' press, as the principal means by which the Party influences the class, was an A B C that had long ago been learned and forgotten.

However, the tendency of the new *Iskra* to repeat things by rote and to chew the A B C over and over again, while pretending to be uttering new words, is by no means accidental; it is the inevitable consequence of the position to which Axelrod and Martov have sunk now that they have dropped into the opportunist wing of our Party. *Noblesse oblige!* They have to go on repeating opportunist phrases, they have to *crawl backwards* so as to be able to find, in the *distant past*, some justification for their position, which is indefensible from the point of view of the struggle at the Congress or of the shades and divisions in the Party that emerged after the Congress. To the profound Akimovist remarks about Jacobinism and Blanquism Comrade Axelrod adds Akimovist lamentations to the effect that not only the "Economists," but also the "politicians" were "one-sided," "went too far," and so on and so forth. Reading the high-flown disquisitions on this subject in the new *Iskra*, which boastingly claims to be above one-sidedness and exaggeration, one asks oneself in perplexity: whose portrait are they painting? Where do they hear this talk? Who does not know that the division of Russian Social-Democrats into Economists and politicians became obsolete long ago? Go through the files of *Iskra* for the last year or two before the Party Congress and you will find that the fight against "Economism" was subsiding and finally came to an end as far back as 1902; you will find that, for example, in July 1903 (No. 43), the "times of Economism" are considered to have "completely passed away." Economism is considered to be "dead and buried," and the enthusiasm of the politicians is regarded as an obvious *ata-vism*. Why, then, should the new editors of *Iskra* wish to revive a division that is dead and buried? Do you think that our fight

with the Akimovs at the Congress was about the old mistakes they committed two years ago in *Rabocheye Dyelo*? Had we behaved in that way we would have been hopeless idiots. But everyone knows that we did not do so, that it was not for their old, dead and buried mistakes in *Rabocheye Dyelo* that we fought the Akimovs at the Congress, but for the *new mistakes* which they committed in their arguments and in the voting at the Congress. It was not by their position on *Rabocheye Dyelo*, but by their position at the Congress that we judged which mistakes had been in effect abandoned and which were still alive and called for controversy. At the time of the Congress the old division into Economists and politicians no longer existed; but numerous opportunist trends continued to exist. They found expression in the debates and voting on a number of issues, and finally led to a new division of the Party into a "majority" and a "minority." The whole point is that the new editors of *Iskra* are for obvious reasons trying to gloss over the connection that exists between this new division and *contemporary* opportunism in our Party, and that they are, consequently, compelled to back away from the new division to the old one. Their inability to explain the political genesis of the new division (or the desire, in order to show themselves accommodating, to cast a veil¹ over its genesis) compels them to go on chewing the cud about a division that has been obsolete for a long time. Everyone knows that the starting point of the new division is the difference of opinion on questions of organisation which began with the controversy over principles of

¹ See Plekhanov's article "Economism" in No. 53 of *Iskra*. The subtitle of the article appears to contain a misprint. For *Thoughts Aloud on the Second Party Congress* one should evidently read *On the Congress of the League*, or perhaps *On Co-optation*. While, under certain circumstances, a spirit of accommodation on questions of personal grievances is commendable, it is quite inadmissible (from the Party as distinct from the philistine point of view) to confuse the issues that agitate the Party, to substitute for the question of the new mistake of Martov and Axelrod who have begun to veer round from orthodoxy to opportunism, the question of the old mistake (never recalled today by anyone outside the new *Iskra*) of the Martynovs and the Akimovs, who today may be on the point of turning from opportunism to orthodoxy on a number of questions of programme and tactics.

organisation (point 1 of the rules) and led to a "practice" worthy of anarchists. The old division into Economists and politicians was based mainly on a difference of opinion on questions of *tactics*.

The new *Iskra* tries to justify this attempt to retreat from the complex, really actual and burning Party issues to issues that have long been settled and have to be artificially dug up, by an amusing display of profound wisdom which cannot be described otherwise than as *khvostism*. Thanks to the facile hand of Comrade Axelrod, the profound "idea" that content is more important than form, that the programme and tactics are more important than organisation, that "the vitality of an organisation is in direct proportion to the volume and importance of the content it gives to the movement," that centralism is not "something self-sufficing," is not an "all-saving talisman," etc., etc., runs like a thread through the writings of the new *Iskra*. Profound and great verities! A programme is indeed more important than tactics, and tactics more important than organisation. The alphabet is more important than etymology, etymology is more important than syntax—but what would we think of those who, after having failed in an examination on syntax, would go about pluming themselves on having been left in the lower form for another year? Comrade Axelrod has spoken like an opportunist on fundamental questions of organisation (point 1), and has behaved like an anarchist inside the organisation (Congress of the League)—and now he is trying to make the principles of Social-Democracy more profound: sour grapes! What is organisation? It is merely a form. What is centralism? It is not a talisman. What is syntax? It is less important than grammar; it is merely a form of combining the elements of grammar. The new editors of *Iskra* write triumphantly: "Will not Comrade Alexandrov agree with us when we say that the Congress did much more for the centralisation of Party work by drawing up a Party programme than by passing the rules, however perfect the latter may seem?"* (No. 56, appendix.) We hope this classical aphorism will acquire the widest fame, no less last-

ing than Comrade Krichevsky's phrase that, like mankind, Social-Democracy always sets itself accomplishable tasks. The wisdom of the new *Iskra* is of exactly the same alloy. Why was Comrade Krichevsky's phrase held up to derision? Because he tried to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats on a tactical question, their inability correctly to formulate political aims, by a commonplace which he tried to palm off as philosophy. In exactly the same way the new *Iskra* tries to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats on questions of organisation, to justify the intelligentsia-like instability of certain comrades—which led them to utter anarchist phrases—by the commonplace that the programme is more important than the rules and that questions of programme are more important than questions of organisation! Well, is this not *khvostism*? Is this not pluming oneself on having been left in the lower form for another year?

The adoption of a programme contributes more to the centralisation of the Party than the passing of the rules. How this commonplace, palmed off as philosophy, smacks of the mentality of a radical intellectual, a mentality that is more akin to bourgeois decadence than to Social-Democracy! For is not the word centralisation in this famous phrase given a meaning that can only be described as *symbolical*? If the authors of this phrase are unable or disinclined to think, they might at least have recalled the simple fact that though the Bundists voted with us in favour of the programme, this did not result in the centralisation of our common work, and did not even save us from a split. Unity on questions of programme and tactics is the necessary but far from adequate condition for Party unity and for centralised Party work (Good God! The sort of ABC one has to chew the cud over nowadays, when all notions have become confused!). The latter demands, in addition, a unity of organisation which, in a Party that has grown to be more than a mere family circle, is inconceivable unless there are formal rules, unless the minority submits to the majority, unless the part submits to the whole. As long as we lacked unity on the essential questions of programme and

tactics we simply admitted that we were living in a time of dispersion and of circle spirit, we said that we must first separate and then unite; we never raised the question of the forms a united organisation might assume; we only talked of the new questions (at that time they really were new) of fighting opportunism on questions of programme and tactics. This fight, as everyone admits, resulted in securing for us a sufficient degree of unity, which was formulated in the Party programme and in the Party's resolutions on tactics; we then had to take the next step and, by common consent, we took it; for we elaborated the *forms* of a united organisation that would unite all the groups into one whole. But now these forms have been half broken, we have been dragged back, dragged back to anarchist action, to phrases, to the revival of a circle in place of the Party editorial board; and this step back is now being justified by the argument that the alphabet is more important for literate speech than a knowledge of syntax.

The philosophy of *khvostism*, which flourished three years ago on questions of tactics, is being revived today on questions of organisation. Take, for instance, this argument of the new editors: "A militant Social-Democratic line in the Party"—writes Comrade Alexandrov—"must not only be enforced by means of an ideological struggle, but by definite organisational forms." And the editors go on to lecture us: "Not bad, this juxtaposition of ideological struggle and forms of organisation. The ideological struggle is a process, but the forms of organisation are just...forms" (this is literally what is printed in No. 56, supplement, p. 4, col. I, bottom of the page), "the purpose of which is to clothe the fluid, developing content—the developing practical work of the Party." This is quite in the spirit of the famous anecdote about a shell being a shell, and a bomb a bomb! The ideological struggle is a process, and the forms of organisation are only forms clothing the content! The issue is whether our ideological struggle will have forms of a *higher type* to clothe them, forms of a Party organisation obligatory for all, or the forms of the former dispersion and the former circles. We have been dragged back

from the higher to the more primitive forms, and this is being justified by the argument that the ideological struggle is a process and forms are merely forms. Exactly like Comrade Krichevsky when, once upon a time, he tried to drag us back from the concept of the tactics-plan to the concept of the tactics-process.

Take the pretentious phrases of the new *Iskra* about the "self-training of the proletariat" that are hurled against those who, it is alleged, are capable of missing the content because of the form. (No. 58, leading article.*) Is this not a second edition of Akimovism? Akimovism, number one, tried to justify the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in formulating tactical tasks by talking about the more "profound" content of the "proletarian struggle" and about the self-training of the proletariat. Akimovism, number two, tries to justify the backwardness in the theory and practice of organisation of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia by similar profound talk about organisation being merely a form, and the whole point being the self-training of the proletariat. Let me tell you gentlemen, who are so solicitous about the younger brother,¹ that the proletariat is not afraid of organisation and discipline! The proletariat will not worry about professors and high-school students, who do not want to join an organisation, being recognised as Party members merely because they work under the control of an organisation. The proletariat is trained for organisation by its whole life much more radically than are many puny intellectuals. A proletariat which has understood our programme and our tactics to any extent will not try to justify backwardness in matters of organisation by talk about form being less important than content. It is not the proletariat, but *certain intellectuals* in our Party who lack *self-training* in the spirit of organisation and discipline, in the spirit of hostility and contempt for anarchist phrase-mongering. The Akimovs, number two, libel

¹ "The younger brother," a phrase used in the 'sixties by sentimental liberals to describe the lower classes. Later it was used chiefly in irony.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

the proletariat when they say that it is not ripe for organisation, just as the Akimovs, number one, did when they said it was not ripe for the political struggle. The proletarian who has become a class conscious Social-Democrat and feels that he is a member of the Party will reject *khvostism* in matters of organisation with the same contempt as he rejected *khvostism* in matters of tactics.

Finally, take the profound wisdom of "Practical Worker" in the new *Iskra*. "If it is understood in the proper way," he says, "the idea of a centralised 'fighting' organisation which unites and centralises the *activities*" (the italics are to make it look more profound) "of revolutionaries can naturally materialise only if such activities exist" (very fresh and clever); "the organisation itself, being a form" (hear! hear!), "can only grow *simultaneously*" (the italics are the author's, as throughout this quotation) "with the growth of revolutionary work which is the content." (No. 57.) Does this not remind you once again of the hero of the popular story who, when he saw a funeral, cried out to the coffin bearers: "Many happy returns of the day"? I am sure there is not a practical worker (without quotation marks) in the whole of our Party who does not understand that it is precisely the form of our activities (*i.e.*, our organisation) that for many years has been lagging and lagging very badly behind the content, and that to shout to these laggards: "Keep in step!" "Don't run ahead!" is something worthy only of the Ivanushkas¹ in our Party. Compare our Party with, say, the Bund. There can be no question that the *content*² of our work is incomparably richer, more many-sided, wider and deeper than the Bund's. The scope of our theoretical views is wider, our programme is more developed, our influence among the working masses (and not among the

¹ Ivanushka the Fool is a character in Russian folk tales who always does and says the wrong thing, for example, shouting, "Many happy returns of the day," on seeing a funeral.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² I leave aside the fact that the *content* of our Party work was indicated (in the programme, etc.) at the Congress in the spirit of revolutionary Social-Democracy only as a *result of a fight* against the very anti-*Iskra*-ists and the very "Marsh" the representatives of which predominate numerically in the "minority."

organised artisans alone) is wider and deeper, our propaganda and agitation are more varied, the pulse of the political work of the leaders and of rank and filers beats faster, the *popular* movements during demonstrations and general strikes are grander, our work among the non-proletarian population is more energetic. But the "form"? Compared with that of the Bund the "form" of our work lags behind disgracefully; the lag is so great that it is glaring and brings the blush of shame to the cheeks of everyone who does not merely stand about "picking his nose," and contemplating the work of his Party. The fact that the organisation of our work lags behind its content is our sore spot, and it was a sore spot long before the Congress, long before the formation of the O.C. The undeveloped and unstable character of the form makes any further serious step in the development of the content impossible; it causes shameful stagnation, waste of strength and discrepancy between word and deed. Everyone is sick and tired of this discrepancy—and now the Axelrods and the "Practical Workers" of the new *Iskra* come along with their profound sermons and say: form must grow naturally and only simultaneously with the content!

This is where a small mistake on a question of organisation (point 1) is apt to bring you, if you try to *add profundity* to a piece of rubbish and to find philosophical grounds for an opportunist phrase. With slow steps, in timid zigzags!—We heard this tune when the issue was a question of tactics; we hear it once again applied to questions of organisation. *Khvostism in questions of organisation* is the natural and inevitable outgrowth of the mentality of an *anarchist individualist* when he tries to elevate his anarchist vacillations (which at the outset may have been accidental) to a *system of views*, to a *difference of principle*. At the Congress of the League we witnessed the beginnings of this sort of anarchism; in the new *Iskra* we see attempts to elevate it to a system of views. These attempts strikingly confirm what was said at the Party Congress about the difference between the point of view of a bourgeois intellectual who joins the Social-Democrats and a proletarian who

has become conscious of his class interests. For instance, "Practical Worker" who wrote to the new *Iskra*, and whose profundity we have become familiar with, denounces me for visualising the Party as "an immense factory" with a director in the shape of the C.C. at its head. (No. 57, supplement.) "Practical Worker" does not realise that the frightful word he utters immediately betrays the mentality of a bourgeois intellectual who is familiar with neither the practice nor the theory of proletarian organisation. For it is precisely the factory, which some seem to regard as a bogey, that is the highest form of capitalist co-operation which has brought together and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organise and placed it at the head of all other sections of the toiling and exploited population. It is precisely Marxism, as the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, that has been teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as an instrument of exploitation (discipline based on the fear of starvation) and as a factor in organisation (discipline based on collective work, united under conditions of technically highly developed production). The discipline and organisation, which it is so difficult for the bourgeois intellectual to acquire, are easily acquired by the proletariat precisely because of the factory "school" he goes through. Mortal fear of this school and complete inability to understand its importance as an organising force are characteristic of ways of thinking which reflect a petty-bourgeois mode of life and which give rise to that anarchism which the German Social-Democrats have called *Edelanarchismus*, i.e., the anarchism of a "noble" gentleman, or gentleman's anarchism, as I would call it. The Russian nihilist is particularly susceptible to this kind of gentleman's anarchism. He thinks of the Party organisation as a monstrous "factory" and of the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as "serfdom" (see Axelrod's feuilleton); division of labour under the leadership of a centre evokes from him tragicomical cries about people being turned into "wheels and screws" (the most outrageous form of this transformation is considered to be the conversion of an editor into a contrib-

utor); mention of the organisational rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful remark (intended for the "formalists") that one can very well dispense with rules altogether.

It sounds improbable, but it is a fact; this is precisely the sort of didactic remark Comrade Martov addressed to me in No. 58 of *Iskra*, quoting, the better to convince me, my own words from "A Letter to a Comrade."* Well, is it not "gentleman's anarchism," is it not *khvostism*, when people begin *justifying* the preservation and glorification of the circle spirit and anarchy in the Party epoch by instances taken from the epoch of dispersion, the epoch of circles?

Why could we dispense with rules before? Because the Party consisted of isolated circles, unconnected by any organisational link. To pass from one circle to another was merely a matter of the "free will" of the individual who was not faced with the will of the whole in any definite form. Controversial questions inside the circles were not settled in accordance with the rules, "*but by fighting it out and by a threat to leave*"; these were the words which I used in "A Letter to a Comrade," basing myself on the experience of a number of circles and of our editorial circle of six in particular. In the circle epoch, these things were natural and inevitable, but it never entered anyone's head to extol them or to regard them as ideal; everyone complained of this dispersion of forces, everyone felt it to be a burden and longed for the time when all the isolated circles would coalesce into a formal Party organisation. And now that they have coalesced, we are being dragged back, and under the cloak of higher organisational ideas we are being served with anarchist phrases! To those who have grown accustomed to loose Oblomov¹ dressing gowns and slippers of the family circle period, formal rules seem narrow, and strait, and burdensome, and low, and bureaucratic, and servile, and a deterrent to the free "process" of the ideological struggle.

¹ Oblomov, the principal character in a novel by Goncharov (1858), is a type of supine, well-intentioned and absolutely useless member of the nobility.—*Ed., Eng. ed.*

Gentleman's anarchism is unable to understand that formal rules are needed precisely to make the substitution of the wide Party link for the narrow circle link possible. There was no need, and it was impossible, to establish formal links inside the circle or between the circles, because the circles were kept together by personal friendships and a confidence which had not to be accounted for and for which no reasons had to be given. The Party link cannot and must not rest on either the one or the other; it must be founded on *formal*, "bureaucratically" (from the point of view of the undisciplined intellectual) worded rules, strict adherence to which alone can safeguard us from the wilfulness and the caprices of the circle spirit, from the circle scramble methods that go by the name of "process of the ideological struggle."

As their trump card against Alexandrov the editors of the new *Iskra* use the didactic remark that "confidence is a delicate matter which cannot be knocked into our hearts and heads." (No. 56, supplement.) The editors fail to realise that by advancing the category of confidence, of *mere* confidence, they once again betray their gentleman's anarchism and their organisational *khvostism*. As long as I was merely a member of a circle—whether it was the editorial circle of six, or the *Iskra* organisation, I was entitled to justify my refusal, say, to work with X merely by expressing a lack of confidence in him, without having to account or give any reason for it. Now that I have become a member of a party I am *no longer entitled* merely to invoke an informal lack of confidence, because this would throw the doors open to every freak and every whim in the old circle spirit; I *must* support my "confidence" or "lack of confidence" by formal reasons, *i.e.*, by invoking a formally established point of our programme, of our tactics or of our rules. I must not confine myself to an unaccounted-for "confidence" or "no confidence," but must realise that all my decisions and all the decisions of any section of the Party must be *accounted for* before the whole Party; in giving expression to my "lack of confidence," and in trying to get the views and wishes that result from that lack of confidence accepted, I must

adhere to a *formally prescribed* procedure. We have risen from the *circle* point of view of unaccounted-for "confidence," to the *Party* point of view which demands adherence to accountable and formally prescribed means of expressing and *testing* our confidence; but the editors are trying to drag us back, and are calling their *khvostism* new organisational views.

Listen to the way our so-called Party editors talk of the literary groups that might claim to be represented on the editorial board. The gentlemen anarchists who have always looked down on that thing called discipline say to us didactically: "We shall not get angry or raise an outcry about discipline." We shall either "come to an understanding" (*sic!*) with the group, if it is reasonable, or just hold up its pretensions to ridicule.

Dear, dear, with what lofty nobility they attack our vulgar "factory" formalism! But in reality it is the old circle phraseology that is being served up by an editorial board which feels that it is not a Party body, but merely the remnant of an old circle. The inner falsity of the position inevitably leads to *anarchist* profundity, which tries to elevate the dispersion, which in words they pharisaically admit to be obsolete, to a *principle* of Social-Democratic organisation. There is no need for a hierarchy of higher and lower Party bodies—gentleman's anarchism regards such a hierarchy as the bureaucratic invention of ministries, departments, etc. (see Axelrod's feuilleton); there is no need for the part to submit to the whole, nor for the "formal bureaucratic" definition of *Party* methods of "coming to an agreement," or agreeing to divide; let the old circle scramble method be sanctified by phrases about "genuinely Social-Democratic" principles of organisation.

This is where the proletarian who has been through the school of the "factory" can and must teach anarchist individualism a lesson. The class conscious worker emerged from these swaddling clothes long ago when he fought shy of the intellectual as such. The class conscious worker knows how to prize the rich store of knowledge and the wider political horizon which he finds in Social-Democratic intellectuals. But to the extent that

a *real* party is formed, the class conscious worker must learn to distinguish the mentality of the soldier of the proletarian army from the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who flaunts anarchist phrases; he must learn to *insist* that the duties of a Party member be fulfilled not only by the rank and filers, but by the "people at the top" as well, he must learn to treat *khvostism* in matters of organisation with the contempt with which he in the old days used to treat *khvostism* in tactical matters!

There is one more characteristic feature of the new *Iskra*'s position in matters of organisation, which is inseparably connected with its Girondism and its gentleman's anarchism: this is the defence of *autonomism* as against centralism. This is the general meaning (if any)¹ that can be attached to this outcry about bureaucracy and autocracy, to these regrets about "undeserved neglect of the non-*Iskra*-ists" (who defended autonomism at the Congress), to these comic cries about our insisting on "unqualified obedience," to these bitter complaints about "Pompadours,"² etc., etc. The opportunist wing of any party will always defend and try to justify all lagging behind, whether in the programme, in tactics or in matters of organisation. The defence of backwardness in matters of organisation (*khvostism*) is closely connected with the defence of *autonomism*. It is true that, speaking generally, autonomism has been so discredited by the three years of propaganda carried on by the old *Iskra* that the new *Iskra* is ashamed, *as yet*, to advocate it openly; it still tries to convince us of its sympathies for "centralism"; but the only proof of these sympathies is that the word "centralism" is always italicised. In actual fact, it is enough to apply the slightest touch of criticism to the "genuinely Social-Democratic" (and not anarchistic?) quasi-centralism of the new *Iskra* for the autonomist standpoint to reveal itself at every step. Has it not become clear to everyone that on questions of organisation Axelrod and Martov have veered back to Akimov? Did they not solemnly admit it them-

¹ I entirely disregard here, as elsewhere in this section, the "co-optational" meaning of these words.

² "Pompadour," a word used by Saltykov-Shchedrin to describe the unlimited and arrogant despotism of tsarist administrators.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

selves in those significant words about "the undeserved neglect of the non-*Iskra*-ists"? And was it not autonomism that Aki-mov and his friends defended at the Congress?

It was autonomism (unless it was anarchism) that Martov and Axelrod defended at the Congress of the League when they, with amusing zeal, tried to prove that the part need not obey the whole, that the part is autonomous in its relation to the whole, that the rules of the League Abroad, in which these relations are formulated, are valid regardless of the will of the Party majority, regardless of the will of the Party centre. It is precisely autonomism that Comrade Martov defends today in the columns of the new *Iskra* (No. 60) on the question of the Central Committee appointing members to the local committees.* I shall not speak of the puerile sophistries which Comrade Martov used at the Congress of the League to defend autonomism, and still uses in the new *Iskra*¹—I think it important to point to the undoubted tendency to *defend autonomism against centralism* as a principle which is the characteristic feature of opportunism on organisational questions.

The only attempt to *analyse* the conception of bureaucracy seems to be contained in the distinction drawn by the new *Iskra* (No. 53) between "formally *democratic* and formally *bureaucratic* principles" (the italics are the author's). This distinction (which, unfortunately, has remained as undeveloped and unexplained as the allusion to the non-*Iskra*-ists) contains a grain of truth. Bureaucracy *versus* democracy is the same thing as centralism *versus* autonomism, it is the organisational principle of revolutionary political democracy as opposed to the organisational principle of the opportunists of Social-Democracy. The latter want to proceed from the bottom upward and, consequently, wherever possible and to the extent that it is possible, it supports autonomism and "democracy," which may (by the over zealous) be carried as far as anarchism. The

¹ In enumerating the points of the rules, Martov left out the point which deals with the relation of the whole to the part: the C.C. "distributes the Party forces." (Point 6.) Can forces be distributed without Party workers being transferred from one committee to another? One feels ashamed to have to insist on such commonplaces.

former proceed from the top, and advocate the extension of the rights and powers of the centre in respect of the parts. In the epoch of dispersion and circles the role of this top, which revolutionary Social-Democracy tried to take as its organisational starting point, was inevitably played by the circle which was most influential because of its activity and its revolutionary consistency (in our case, the *Iskra* organisation). In the period when the real unity of the Party has been restored and the now obsolete circles have been dissolved in this unity, the *Party Congress*, as the sovereign organ of the Party, necessarily becomes this top; the Congress as far as possible unites the representatives of all the active organisations; it appoints the central bodies (with a personnel which may sometimes satisfy the advanced elements in the Party more than it does the backward elements and be more to the taste of its revolutionary wing than of its opportunist wing) and leaves them at the top until the next Congress. This at any rate is the custom among the European Social-Democrats, although gradually, not without difficulty, opposition and squabbles, this custom, which is so fundamentally hateful to the anarchists, is beginning to spread even among Asiatic Social-Democrats.

It is well worth noting that these fundamental characteristics of opportunism on organisational questions (autonomism, gentleman's or intellectual anarchism, *khvostism* and Girondism) are, *mutatis mutandis*, observed in all the Social-Democratic Parties all over the world, wherever the Party is divided into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing (and what Party is not thus divided?). Quite recently this came to light in a particularly striking way in the German Social-Democratic Party, when its defeat at the election in the twentieth electoral division of Saxony ("the Göhre¹ incident") raised the question

¹ Göhre was returned to the Reichstag on June 16, 1903, in the fifteenth division of Saxony, but resigned after the Dresden Congress; the electors of the twentieth division, which had been made vacant by the death of Rosonow, wanted to offer the candidature to Göhre. The Central Council of the Party and the Central Agitation Committee for Saxony opposed this, and although they were not formally entitled to annul the candidature of Göhre, they succeeded in obtaining his withdrawal. At the polls the Social-Democrats were defeated.

of the *principles* of the Party organisation. That this should have become an issue of principle was mainly due to the zeal of the German opportunists. Göhre (an ex-parson, the author of the well-known book *Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter* and one of the "heroes" of the Dresden Congress * was an extreme opportunist, and the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, the organ of the consistent German opportunists, at once "intervened" in his favour.

Opportunism in programme matters is naturally connected with opportunism in tactics and opportunism in matters of organisation. Comrade Wolfgang Heine undertook to expound the "new" point of view. To give the reader an idea of the political complexion of this typical intellectual, who joined the Social-Democratic movement and brought with him opportunist habits of thinking, it will be sufficient to say that Comrade Wolfgang Heine is a little less than a German Comrade Aki-mov and a little more than a German Comrade Egorov.

Comrade Wolfgang Heine took the warpath in *Sozialistische Monatshefte* with no less a flourish of trumpets than Comrade Axelrod in the new *Iskra*. The title of his article itself is priceless: "Democratic Observations on the Göhre Incident." (*Sozialistische Monatshefte*, April, No. 4.) The contents are no less thundering. Comrade W. Heine protests against all "encroachments upon the autonomy of the constituency," champions the "democratic principle," and protests against the intervention of the "higher authority" (i.e., of the Central Council of the Party) in the free election of deputies by the people. The point at issue, says Comrade Heine didactically, is not a casual incident, but "*a general tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party*," a trend, he says, which might have been observed before, but which is now becoming particularly dangerous. We must "recognise the principle that the local institutions of the Party are the vehicles of Party life" (this is a plagiarism of Martov's pamphlet "Once Again a Minority"). We must not "get accustomed to having all important political decisions emanating from one centre," we must warn the Party against "a doctrinaire policy that loses contact with life" (taken from Comrade Martov's speech at the Party Congress to the effect

that "life will have its own way"). Comrade Heine proceeds to deepen his argument: "... If we look into the roots of things, if we abstract ourselves from personal conflicts which in this case, as always, played no small part, we shall find that this bitterness against the *revisionists* [the italics are the author's, who is evidently hinting at the distinction between fighting revisionism and fighting the revisionists] expresses most of all the distrust the Party officials entertain towards '*outsiders*' [evidently, Heine has not yet read the pamphlet about the state of siege in our Party and is reduced to using an Anglicism—"outsidertum"], the distrust that tradition has for everything unfamiliar, that the impersonal institution has for everything individual [see the resolution moved by Axelrod at the Congress of the League on the suppression of individual initiative], in a word, that very tendency which we have defined as a tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party."

The idea of "discipline" arouses in Comrade Heine the same noble indignation that it does in Comrade Axelrod. . . . "The revisionists," he writes, "have been accused of lack of discipline for having written for the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, the Social-Democratic character of which they even questioned on the ground that it is not *controlled by the Party*. This attempt to narrow the concept 'Social-Democratic,' this insistence on *discipline* in the sphere of ideological production, where complete freedom must reign [*cf.* ideological struggle is a process, while forms of organisation are only forms], are sufficient evidence of a trend towards bureaucracy and towards the suppression of individuality."

And Heine goes on for quite a long time fulminating against this hateful tendency to make "one all-embracing great organisation as centralised as possible, one set of tactics and one theory," and he fulminates against the insistence on "absolute obedience," "blind submission," against "vulgarised centralism," etc., etc., literally "*à la* Axelrod."

The controversy raised by W. Heine spread further; and as there were no squabbles about co-optation to obscure the issue in the German Party and as the German Akimovs have the opportunity of revealing their countenances in a permanent jour-

nal of their own and not only at congresses—the controversy soon reached the stage of analysing the tendencies of the principle of orthodoxy and revisionism in matters of organisation. K. Kautsky came out (in *Die Neue Zeit*, 1904, No. 28, in an article "*Wahlkreis und Partei*" ["The Constituency and the Party"]) as one of the spokesmen of the revolutionary wing (which, exactly as in our Party, is, of course, accused of "dictatorship," and of "inquisitorial" tendencies and other dreadful things). "W. Heine's article," wrote Kautsky, "reveals the mode of thinking of the whole revisionist school." In France and in Italy, as well as in Germany, the opportunists are all for autonomism, for a slackening of Party discipline, for reducing it to nought; in all countries these tendencies lead to disruption and to the distortion of the "democratic principle" into *anarchism*. Giving the opportunists a lesson in matters of organisation, K. Kautsky says:

"Democracy is not the absence of authority, democracy is not anarchy, it is control exercised by the masses over their representatives, as distinct from other forms of government under which the supposed servants of the people are in actual fact its masters."

K. Kautsky traces in detail the disruptive role of opportunist autonomism in the different countries and shows that it is precisely the adherence of "*a number of bourgeois elements*" to Social-Democracy¹ that gives strength to opportunism, to autonomism and to the tendency to violate discipline. He reminds us again and again that "organisation is the weapon with which the proletariat will win its freedom," and that "organisation is a characteristically proletarian weapon in the class struggle."

In Germany, where opportunism is weaker than in France or in Italy,

"autonomist tendencies have up to the present only resulted in more or less high-flown declamations against dictators and great inquisitors, against anathemas² and heresy hunting, in endless cavilling and squabbling that would, if the other side replied to it, only result in endless quarrels."

¹ As an example K. Kautsky mentions Jaurès. To the extent that they deviate to opportunism people of this type "begin to consider Party discipline an intolerable constraint on their free personality."

² *Bannstrahl*: anathema. This is the German equivalent of the Russian "state of siege" and "the exceptional laws." It is the "frightful word" of the German opportunists.

It is not surprising that in Russia, where opportunism in the Party is even weaker than in Germany, autonomist trends should have produced fewer ideas and more "high-flown declamations" and squabbling.

It is not surprising that Kautsky arrives at the following conclusion:

"There is probably no other issue on which the revisionism of different countries, in spite of all its varieties and different shades, is so completely uniform as on the question of organisation."

To define the tendencies of the principles of orthodoxy and of revisionism in this sphere, Kautsky, too, makes use of a "frightful phrase," viz., bureaucracy *versus* democracy. "We are told," he writes, "that allowing the Party leadership to influence the selection of a candidate (for parliament) by the constituencies would be a 'shameful violation of the democratic principle, which demands that all political activity proceed from the bottom upwards, from the independent activity of the masses, and not from the top downwards by bureaucratic means. . . .' But if there is a democratic principle, it is that the majority must have its way against the minority and not the other way round. . . ."

The election of a member of parliament by a constituency is an important question for the Party as a whole, and the Party must influence the nomination of a candidate, if only through the medium of the Party's representatives (*Vertrauensmänner*).

"Let those who consider this to be too bureaucratic or too centralistic suggest that candidates be nominated by a vote of the whole Party membership (*sämtlicher Parteigenossen*). He who thinks this is not practicable has no right to complain of a deficiency of democratic principle when the function, like many other functions of the Party, is exercised by one or by several Party organs."

In accordance with the "common law" of the German Party the local constituencies used to "come to a friendly agreement" with the Party leadership about the choice of a candidate. "But the Party has grown too large for this tacit common law to suffice any longer. Common law ceases to be a rule when it ceases to be recognised as something self-evident, when its stipulations, or even its very existence, are *called in question*. Then it becomes absolutely necessary to formulate the law, to codify

it," to adopt a more "precise statutory definition¹ (*statutarische Festlegung*) and thus increase the strictness (*grössere Straffheit*) of the organisation."

So here you have, in different surroundings, the same struggle between the opportunist wing and the revolutionary wing of the Party on the question of organisation, the same conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and "bureaucracy," between a tendency to relax and a tendency to tighten up the strictness of organisation and of discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and the tempered proletarian, between intellectual individualism and proletarian cohesion. We may ask, what was the attitude of *bourgeois democracy* to all this conflict, not the attitude of bourgeois democracy which frolicsome history has only promised to show privately to Comrade Axelrod one day, but the actual, real bourgeois democracy which in Germany has spokesmen who are quite as learned and quite as keen observers as our own gentlemen of *Osvobozhdeniye*? German bourgeois democracy at once responded to the new controversy and unanimously took the side of the opportunist wing of the Social-Democratic Party—just as Russian bourgeois democracy would do, and as has always been done in every other country. *Die Frankfurter Zeitung*, a leading organ of the German Stock Exchange, in its evening edition (April 7, 1902), published a furious leading article which shows that the shameless plagiarism of Comrade Axelrod is becoming quite a disease in the German press. The stern democrats of the Frankfort Stock Exchange scourge "autocracy" in the Social-Democratic Party, "Party dictatorship," "the autocratic domination of the Party officials," these "anathemas" which are intended "as it were, to chastise revisionism as a whole" (*cf.* "the false charge of opportunism"), the in-

¹ It would be very instructive to compare Kautsky's remarks on the transition from tacitly recognised common law to the formal, fixed statutory law with all the "changes" our Party, in general, and the editorial board, in particular, has undergone since the Party Congress. See the report of the speech by Vera Zasulich (at the Congress of the League, p. 66 *et sup.*), who does not seem to realise the significance of the changes that are taking place.*

sistence on "blind submission," the transforming of members of the Party into "political corpses" (this is somewhat stronger language than "cogwheels and screws"). The indignation of the knights of the Stock Exchange is aroused by the sight of the undemocratic state of affairs in the Social-Democratic Party: "All personal originality," all individuality must be persecuted, because they threaten to bring about the French state of affairs, Jaurèsism and Millerandism, as was stated in so many words by Zindermann, who reported on the question at the Party Congress of the Saxon Social-Democrats.

* * *

Thus, in so far as the new catchwords of the new *Iskra* on the question of organisation have any general meaning at all there cannot be any doubt that they have an opportunist meaning. This conclusion is confirmed by the results of our analysis of the Party Congress, which divided into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, and by the example of *all* the Social-Democratic Parties of Western Europe where opportunism in the question of organisation found expression in the same tendencies, in the same accusations and very often even in the same catchwords. Of course, the national peculiarities of the individual parties and the different political conditions in the different countries will leave their impress and make German opportunism unlike French opportunism, French opportunism unlike Italian opportunism and Italian opportunism unlike Russian opportunism. But the uniformity of the fundamental division of all these Parties into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, the uniformity of the argument and tendencies of opportunism in questions of organisation stand out clearly in spite of all this difference of conditions.¹ The multitude of representatives of the radical intelligentsia in the ranks of our Marxists and of our Social-Democrats has been making the pres-

¹ No one has any doubt today that the old division of Russian Social-Democracy on questions of tactics into Economists and politicians was uniform with the division of the whole of Social-Democracy into opportunists and revolutionaries, although the difference between Comrades Martynov and Akimov on the one hand, and between Comrades von Vollmar and von Elm, on the other, or Jaurès and Millerand, is very great. Nor will anyone doubt the similarity in the main divisions on the organisa-

ence of opportunism inevitable, for it is produced by the mentality of the radical intellectual in the most varied spheres and in the most varied forms. We have fought opportunism on the fundamental problems of our conception of the world, on questions of our programme, and complete divergence of aims has inevitably led to an irrevocable separation between the Social-Democrats and the liberals who had corrupted our legal Marxism. We have fought opportunism on tactical questions, and our differences with Comrades Krichevsky and Akimov on these less important questions were naturally only temporary, and were not followed by the formation of separate parties. We must now overcome the opportunism of Martov and Axelrod on organisational questions, which, of course, are still less fundamental than questions of programme and tactics, but which have now come to the forefront of the stage in our Party life.

When speaking of fighting opportunism, there is a characteristic feature of present-day opportunism in every sphere that must never be overlooked: this is its vagueness, its diffuseness, its elusiveness. The very nature of the opportunist is such that he will always try to avoid formulating the issue clearly and irrevocably; he will always try to find the resultant force, will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually excluding points of view, he will try to "agree" with both and reduce his differences of opinion to slight amendments, doubts, innocently good intentions, etc., etc. Comrade Eduard Bernstein, an opportunist on questions of programme, "agrees" with the revolutionary programme of the Party; and although he is anxious, no doubt, to see it "radically reformed," he thinks it would be inopportune and inexpedient and that it is more important to bring out "general principles" and "criticism" (which is mainly the uncritical borrowing of the principles and catchwords of bourgeois democracy). Comrade von Vollmar, an opportunist

tional question, in spite of the enormous difference between the conditions of politically disfranchised and politically free countries. It is extremely characteristic that the highly principled editors of *Iskra*, in briefly touching on the controversy between Kautsky and Heine (No. 64*), timidly evaded the question of the tendencies of *principles* of all opportunism and of orthodoxy on the organisational question.

on tactical questions, is also in complete agreement with the old tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy and also confines himself mainly to declamations, to petty amendments, to sneers; he never *openly* advocates definitely "ministerialist" tactics. The opportunists on organisational questions, Comrades Martov and Axelrod, have also up to the present failed to produce, though challenged to do so, any definite statement of principles that could be fixed in "a statutory way"; they, too, would like, certainly they would like a "radical reform" of our organisational rules (*Iskra*, No. 58,* p. 2, col. 3), but they would prefer to devote themselves first to "general problems of organisation" (because a really radical reform of our rules, which in spite of point 1 is after all a centralist one, would inevitably lead, if it were carried out in the spirit of the new *Iskra*, to autonomism; and Comrade Martov, of course, does not like admitting even to himself that, *in principle*, his tendency is towards autonomism). "In principle," their attitude towards the organisational question displays all the colours of the rainbow: the predominant note is the innocent, pathetic declamations about autocracy and bureaucracy, about blind obedience, about cogwheels and screws—declamations which sound so innocent that it requires no small effort to discern in them what is really concerned with principle and what is really concerned with co-optation. But the deeper the woods, the thicker the trees: attempts to analyse and give a precise definition of the hated "bureaucracy" inevitably lead to autonomism, attempts to "deepen" and to vindicate inevitably lead to a justification of backwardness, to *khvostism*, to Girondist phrases. At last, as the only really definite principle, which in practice, consequently, stands out with particular relief (practice is always in advance of theory), there emerges the principle of *anarchism*. Sneering at discipline—autonomism—anarchism—these are the stairs our organisational opportunism alternately climbs and descends, jumping from step to step and skilfully evading any definite statement of its principles.¹ Opportunism in questions of pro-

¹ It will now be fully apparent to those who remember the debate on point 1 that the mistake committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod on point 1 *inevitably* leads, when developed and deepened, to

gramme and tactics displays exactly the same stages—sneering at “orthodoxy,” narrowness and immobility—revisionist “criticism” and ministerialism—bourgeois democracy.

In close psychological connection with their hatred of discipline there is an incessant, whining note of disgruntledness, which can be detected in all the writings of all contemporary opportunists in general, and of our minority in particular. They are always being persecuted, restricted, kicked out, besieged and bullied. These catchwords contain much more psychological and political truth than the author of the pleasant and witty joke about bullies and bullied probably suspected. For, indeed, you have only to take the minutes of our Party Congress to see that the minority includes all those who took offence, all those who for one reason or another were offended by revolutionary Social-Democracy. It includes the Bundists and the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists whom we kept on “offending” until they withdrew from the Congress; the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists, who were mortally offended by the suppression of all separate organisations in general and of their own in particular; Comrade Makhov who was offended each time he took the floor (because every time he did so he made a point of disgracing him-

organisational opportunism. Comrade Martov’s initial idea, self-registration of Party members, is nothing else than false “democracy,” the idea of building the Party from the bottom upwards. My idea, on the other hand, is “bureaucratic” in the sense that the Party is built from the top downwards, from the Party Congress to the individual Party organisations. The mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, anarchist phrases, opportunist, *khvostist* profundity—all these were already discerned in the debate on point 1. Comrade Martov says that “new ideas are beginning to be worked out” by the new *Iskra*. This is true in the sense that, beginning with point 1, he and Comrade Axelrod have been really advancing thought in a new direction. The one thing wrong is that it is an opportunist direction. The more they “work” in *this* direction the deeper will they get stuck in the mire. This was clear to Comrade Plekhanov at the Party Congress and in his article “What Should Not Be Done?” he warned them once again: I am prepared even to co-opt you, but for goodness’ sake do not continue along this road which can only bring you to opportunism and anarchism. Martov and Axelrod did not follow the good advice: “What? Are we to turn back? agree with Lenin that this co-optation was only a squabble? Never! We will show him that we are men of principle!”—and so they have. They have shown everyone that in so far as they have any new principles, they are the principles of opportunism.

self); and finally, Comrades Martov and Axelrod were offended because they were "falsely accused of opportunism" in connection with point 1 of the rules and because they were defeated in the ballot. All these mortal offences were not the accidental outcome of bad jokes, violent behaviour, furious polemics, slamming of doors and shaking of fists as so many philistines still imagine, but the inevitable political result of the three years of ideological work that *Iskra* had carried on. If in the whole course of these three years we not only wagged our tongues but gave expression to convictions that had to lead to action, we could not avoid fighting the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the "Marsh" at the Congress. And since we, together with Comrade Martov, who fought in the front line with vizor raised, had offended such a lot of people—we had only to offend Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov just the tiniest bit for the cup to overflow. Quantity was transformed into quality. The negation was negated. All the offended forgot their mutual squabbles, fell weeping into each other's arms, and raised the banner of "revolt against Leninism."¹

A revolt is an excellent thing when it is the advanced elements that revolt against the reactionary elements. It is a good thing when the revolutionary wing revolts against the opportunist wing. But it is a bad thing when the opportunist wing revolts against the revolutionary wing.

Comrade Plekhanov is compelled to take part in this dirty business in the capacity of a prisoner of war, as it were. He tries to "vent his feelings" by fishing out isolated clumsy phrases written by authors of resolutions in favour of the "majority" and exclaims as he does so: "Poor Comrade Lenin! What fine orthodox supporters he has!" (*Iskra*, No. 63, supplement.)

Well, Comrade Plekhanov, I can only say that if I am poor, the editors of the new *Iskra* are downright paupers. However poor I may be I have not yet sunk to such utter destitution as to have to shut my eyes to the Party Congress and hunt for

¹ This amazing expression is Comrade Martov's (*The State of Siege*, p. 68). Comrade Martov waited till they were five strong to raise the "revolt" against my single self. Comrade Martov is not a skilful polemist: he wants to destroy his opponent by paying him the greatest compliments.

material to exercise my wit on in the resolutions of committeemen. However poor I may be I am a thousand times better off than those whose supporters do not inadvertently utter a clumsy phrase, but on all issues, whether of organisation, of tactics or of programme, zealously and steadily advocate principles which are opposed to the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy. However poor I may be I have not yet reached the stage where I have to *conceal from the public* the praise lavished on me by such supporters. But the editors of *Iskra* have to do this.

Reader, do you know what the Voronezh Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. is? If you do not, read the minutes of the Party Congress. You will discover that the line of that committee is adequately expressed by Comrade Akimov and Comrade Brooker who at the Congress fought the revolutionary wing of our Party all along the line, and who have been ranked as opportunists scores of times by everybody, from Comrade Plekhanov to Comrade Popov.

Well, this Voronezh Committee, in its January leaflet (No. 12, January 1904), makes the following statement:

"Last year a great and important event took place in our continually growing Party: the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., a congress of the representatives of its organisations, was held. Convening a congress is a very complicated business, and under monarchist conditions it is a dangerous, a difficult business. Consequently, it is not surprising that the business was carried out *in a far from perfect way*, and that the Congress itself, although it passed off quite successfully, did not fulfill all the Party's expectations. The comrades whom the Conference of 1902 commissioned to convene the Congress were arrested, and *the Congress was organised by persons who represented one of the trends in Russian Social-Democracy, viz., the "Iskra"-ists. Many Social-Democratic organisations other than Iskra were not invited to take part in the work of the Congress; this is one of the reasons why* the task of drawing up a *programme and rules* for the Party was carried out by the Congress in an *extremely imperfect way*; the delegates themselves admit that the rules contain important omissions 'which may result in dangerous misunderstandings.' The *Iskra*-ists themselves split at the Congress, and many prominent workers in our R.S.D.L.P., who hitherto had appeared to be fully in agreement with the *Iskra* programme of action, have admitted that many of its views, which were supported *mainly by Lenin and Plekhanov*, are impractical. Although the latter got the upper hand at the Congress, the mistakes of the theoreticians were soon corrected by the forces of real life and the demands of real work in which all non-*Iskra*-ists also take part, and after the

Congress important amendments were introduced. *"Iskra" has undergone a profound change and promises to give careful attention to the demands of workers in the Social-Democratic movement in general. Thus, although the work of this Congress will have to be revised at the next congress, and, as is obvious to the delegates, was unsatisfactory, and therefore cannot be accepted by the Party as unimpeachable decisions, the Congress has cleared up the situation inside the Party, has collected much material for the theoretical and organisational work of the Party, and has been an immensely instructive experience for the work of the Party in general. The decisions of the Congress and the rules drawn up by it will be taken into account by all the organisations, but in view of their obvious imperfections, many will not be guided exclusively by them.*

"Realising the importance of the common work of the Party, the Voronezh Committee has actively responded to all the questions concerning the organisation of the Congress. It recognises the importance of what took place at the Congress and welcomes the change undergone by *"Iskra,"* which has become the central organ. Although the state of affairs in the Party and in the central organ does not yet satisfy us, we trust that with a common effort the difficult work of organising the Party will be made more perfect. In view of false rumours, the Voronezh Committee informs the comrades that there can be no question of the Voronezh Committee withdrawing from the Party. The Voronezh Committee realises perfectly well what a dangerous precedent might be created by the withdrawal of a workers' organisation like the Voronezh Committee from the R.S.D.L.P., what a reproach this would be to the Party, and of what disadvantage this would be to workers' organisations which might follow our example. We must not cause new splits but must strive persistently to unite all class conscious workers and Socialists in a single party. Besides, the Second Congress was not an inaugural congress but an ordinary congress. Expulsion from the Party can only take place on the decision of a Party court, and no organisation, not even the Central Committee, has the right to expel any Social-Democratic organisation from the Party. What is more, the Second Congress passed point 8 of the rules, which makes every organisation autonomous (independent) in its local affairs, and this entitles the Voronezh Committee to put its organisational views into practice and advocate them in the Party."

The editors of the new *Iskra*, in quoting this leaflet in No. 61, reprinted the second half of what we have quoted and which

is here printed in large type; as for the first half, which is here printed in small type, the editors *preferred to leave it out*.

They were ashamed.

R. SOMETHING ABOUT DIALECTICS

Two Revolutions

A general glance at the progress of our Party crisis will very easily show that with minor exceptions the composition of the two opposing sides has in the main remained unchanged; it has been the struggle between the revolutionary wing and the opportunist wing in our Party. But this struggle has passed through exceedingly different stages, and anyone who wants to understand the mass of literature that has been accumulated, the mass of fragmentary evidence, of passages torn from their context, of isolated accusations, and so on, must make himself familiar in detail with the peculiarities of each of these stages.

Let us enumerate the principal stages which may be clearly distinguished from each other: 1) The controversy over point 1 of the rules. A purely ideological struggle around the basic principles of organisation. Plekhanov and I are left in the minority. Martov and Axelrod propose an opportunist formula and find themselves in the arms of the opportunists. 2) The split in the *Iskra* organisation on the question of the lists of candidates for the Central Committee: Fomin or Vasilyev in the group of five, Trotsky or Travinsky in the group of three. Plekhanov and I gain a majority (nine to seven), to a certain extent precisely because we were in a minority on point 1. Martov's coalition with the opportunists confirms all my fears that had been raised by the O.C. incident. 3) Continuation of the debate on the details of the rules. Martov is again rescued by the opportunists. We are again in the minority and we insist on the rights of the minority in the centres. 4) The seven extreme opportunists leave the Congress. We become the majority and defeat the coalition (*Iskra*-ist minority, "Marsh" and anti-*Iskra*-ists) at the elections. Martov and Popov decline to take their seats in our groups of three. 5) The post-Congress squabble about co-optation. An orgy of anarchist behaviour and

anarchist phrases. The least stable and least steady elements of the "minority" get the upper hand. 6) To prevent a split, Plekhanov adopts the policy of "killing with kindness."¹ The "minority" takes possession of the editorial board of the C.O. and of the Council and attacks the C.C. with all its might. The squabble continues to pervade everything. 7) The first attack on the C.C. is repelled. The squabble seems to be subsiding. It becomes possible to discuss in comparative calm two purely ideological questions which greatly excite the Party: a) the question of the political significance and the explanation of the division of our Party into a "majority" and a "minority" which took shape at the Second Congress and replaced all previous divisions, and b) the position of the new *Iskra* on the question of organisation.

Each one of these stages is marked by an essentially different situation in the struggle and in the immediate object of the attack; each stage is, as it were, a separate battle in one and the same campaign. Our struggle cannot be understood unless a study is made of the concrete situation in each battle. When we have done that we shall find that development does actually proceed dialectically, by way of contradictions: the minority becomes the majority, the majority becomes the minority; each side passes from the defensive to the offensive, and from the offensive to the defensive; the starting point of the struggle (point 1) is "negated," and gives way to an all-pervading squabble,² but then begins the "negation of the negation" and, after having managed somehow to live more or less harmoniously with our God-sent wife in the various centres, we once more return to the starting point of the purely ideological struggle, but this time the thesis has been enriched by all the results of the "antithesis" and has become a higher synthesis, in

¹ English in the original. Plekhanov said that he had embraced the Martovists in order to stifle them.—*Ed.*

² The difficult problem of drawing a line between squabbles and dissensions on principles thus solves itself: all that refers to co-optation is squabble; all that refers to the analysis of the struggle at the Congress, to the dispute on point 1 and to the turn in the direction of anarchism and opportunism, are dissensions on principle.

which the isolated, accidental error of point 1 has grown into a quasi-system of opportunist views on the question of organisation, in which the connection between this phenomenon and the basic division of our Party into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing becomes increasingly apparent to all. In a word, not only do oats grow according to Hegel but the Russian Social-Democrats wage war among themselves according to Hegel.

But the great Hegelian dialectics which Marxism, after having put it on its feet, made its own, must never be confused with the vulgar procedure of justifying the zigzags of politicians who swing over from the revolutionary wing to the opportunist wing of the Party, or with the vulgar habit of lumping together all the individual statements, the individual moments in the development of the various stages of a single process. Genuine dialectics does not justify individual errors; it studies the inevitable turns and proves their inevitability by means of a thorough, detailed analysis of the process in all its concreteness. The fundamental thesis of dialectics is: there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete. One more point: the great Hegelian dialectics must never be confused with that vulgar worldly wisdom so well expressed by the Italian phrase: *mettere la coda dove non va il capo* (to put the tail in where the head will not go).

The result of the dialectical development of our Party struggle has been two revolutions. The Party Congress was a real revolution, as Comrade Martov rightly remarked in his article, "Once Again a Minority." The jesters of the minority are also right when they say: revolutions move the world, so we made a revolution! They did indeed make a revolution after the Congress; and it is true that, speaking generally, it is revolutions that move the world. But the concrete significance of each concrete revolution is not defined by this general aphorism; there are revolutions that are more like reaction, to paraphrase the unforgettable expression of the unforgettable Comrade Makhov. We must ascertain whether it was the revolutionary wing or the opportunist wing of the Party that was the real force which

made the revolution, we must ascertain what principles inspired the fighters—revolutionary or opportunist—before we can determine whether the “world” (our Party) was moved forward or backward by a given concrete revolution.

Our Party Congress was unique and unprecedented in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. For the first time a secret revolutionary party succeeded in emerging from the darkness of underground into broad daylight, and showed all and sundry the progress and outcome of the struggle inside our Party, showed the face of our Party, and the face of each one of its more or less noticeable sections in questions of programme, tactics and organisation. For the first time we succeeded in getting rid of the traditions of circle looseness and revolutionary philistinism, we succeeded in bringing together dozens of the most varied groups, many of which had been fiercely hostile to each other, which were united only by the power of an idea and prepared (prepared in principle) to sacrifice all their group separateness and group independence for the great whole, which we are creating for the first time—the *Party*. But in politics sacrifices are not obtained gratis, they have to be taken in battle. The battle to kill the separate organisations was necessarily very fierce. The breeze of open and free struggle became a gale. The gale swept away every conceivable remnant—and an excellent thing that it did so!—of circle interests, sentiments and traditions without exception, and for the first time produced official bodies that were really organs of the *Party*.

But it is one thing to call oneself something, and another to be it. It is one thing to sacrifice the circle spirit for the Party in principle, another thing to renounce one's own circle. The breeze proved too strong for those who were used to musty philistinism. As Comrade Martov rightly put it (accidentally) in his article “Once Again a Minority,” “the Party was unable to stand its first Congress.” The sense of grievance for the killing of the organisations rankled too much. The furious gale raised all the mud from the bed of our Party stream, and the mud is taking its *revanche*. The old, hardened circle spirit got

the better of the newly born Party spirit. The opportunist wing of the Party, crushingly defeated at first, got the better of the revolutionary wing—for the time being, of course—by being reinforced by the accidental capture of Akimov.

The result was the new *Iskra*, which is forced to develop and deepen the error its editors committed at the Party Congress. The old *Iskra* taught the truths of revolutionary struggle. The new *Iskra* teaches the worldly wisdom of yielding and getting on with everyone. The old *Iskra* was the organ of militant orthodoxy. The new *Iskra* brings us a recrudescence of opportunism—mainly on questions of organisation. The old *Iskra* earned the honourable dislike of both Russian and Western opportunists. The new *Iskra* has “grown wise” and soon will no longer be ashamed of the praise lavished upon it by the extreme opportunists. The old *Iskra* marched unswervingly towards its goal, and there was no discrepancy between its words and its deeds. The inherent falsity of the position of the new *Iskra* inevitably—irrespective of anyone’s will and intention—leads to political hypocrisy. It cries out against the circle spirit in order to camouflage the victory of circle spirit over Party spirit. It pharisaically condemns a split, as if one can imagine any other way of avoiding a split in a party that is at all organised except by the submission of the minority to the majority. It insists on the necessity of taking revolutionary public opinion into account and at the same time, while it tries to conceal the praise of the Akimovs, it goes in for petty scandal-mongering about the committees of the revolutionary wing of the Party!¹ Shame! How they have disgraced our old *Iskra*!

One step forward, two steps back. . . . Such things happen in the lives of individuals, and in the history of nations, and in the development of parties. It would be criminal cowardice to doubt for one moment the inevitable and complete triumph of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy, of proletarian organisation and of Party discipline. We have won a great

¹ A stereotyped form has been adopted for this pleasant pastime: our special correspondent X informs us that Committee of the majority Y has behaved badly to Comrade Z of the minority.

deal, and we must go on fighting undeterred by reverses, fighting steadfastly, despising the philistine methods of circle squabble, doing all we can to preserve the single party organisation of Russian Social-Democracy which has been established at the cost of such effort, and by dint of tireless and systematic work we must make every Party member, and the workers in particular, fully and intelligently understand his Party duties, the struggle at the Second Party Congress, and all the causes and all the stages of our disagreements; so that he may learn how disastrous is opportunism, which in the sphere of organisation surrenders as helplessly to bourgeois psychology, as uncritically adopts the point of view of bourgeois democracy, and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat, as it does in the sphere of our programme and of our tactics.

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Divided by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by slave labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the "lower depths" of utter destitution, savagery and degeneration, the proletariat can become, and will inevitably become, an invincible force only when its ideological unity round the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organisation, which unites millions of toilers in the army of the working class. Neither the decrepit rule of Russian tsarism, nor the senile rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army. It will close its ranks more tightly than ever, in spite of all zigzags and steps backward, in spite of all the opportunist phrases of the Girondists of modern Social-Democracy, in spite of the smug praise of out-of-date circle spirit, in spite of all the tinsel and fuss of *intellectual* anarchism.

LETTER TO V. A. NOSKOV, MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE*

September 11, 1904.

DEAR COMRADE!

You inform me again that the "Central Committee" has expressed the wish that I join the editorial board of the C.O. And I in turn must repeat that this, to say the least, is inaccurate. When you made the formal statement that the declaration of the C.C. in question was adopted unanimously by the C.C., all being present except one, I immediately replied (August 18, 1904) that this was not true. The declaration was signed by three members of the C.C. out of a total which only recently was nine; and these three quite illegally declared that Comrade Ossipov was not a member of the C.C., while the latter wrote to me stating that he still considered himself to be a member. It was illegal to announce that a comrade had resigned without discussing the matter with him. Both the arguments with which you and your two colleagues tried to justify this illegal act are plainly invalid. You stated that Comrade Ossipov had formally resigned at the preceding ordinary meeting of the C.C. This is not true, for at the end of May (*i.e.*, several months after that meeting, which took place in February or in March) we regarded the C.C. as consisting of nine members, and this is certified by the agreement of May 26, 1904, which is signed by three members of the C.C. and by the letter appended to that agreement.** You stated that after that meeting Comrade Ossipov joined a local committee, which a member of the C.C. is not entitled to do. Comrade Ossipov has written to me on this point, stating that he had been sent to take part in the local work of the district in question on the proposal of precisely those members of the C.C. who now declare that he is no longer a

member, and that he did not work as a formal member of the committee. Besides, even if a member of the C.C. had actually irregularly and against the rules joined a local committee, it does not follow that the only way of correcting this irregularity is for the member to resign from the C.C.; he could resign from the local committee. Finally, you yourselves were forced to admit in your letter to me that the three members of the C.C. received a report to the effect that the resignation of Comrade Ossipov was a debatable question. That this question should have been decided by three members of the C.C. in the absence of Ossipov, and without even hearing what Ossipov had to say, was a patent and outrageous breach of the rules. Of course, the three members of the C.C. could count on the support of the Party Council which is controlled by the editors; of course, the three members of the C.C. could rely on the bargain that has been formally concluded, or tacitly accepted, with the supporters of the minority in the Council. But this would not mend matters, it would aggravate them by elements of political bad faith. It was equally wrong for the three members of the C.C. to accept the resignation of Comrade Travinsky, of which not all the members of the C.C. had been informed prior to the meeting. So far you have been unable to give me any exact information as to when this resignation was handed in, and to whom. The only reply you made sounded like an insult. You said: "Inquire of the collegium in Russia," and yet you had just come from this collegium (the same collegium of three!), while I have no means of communicating with the said collegium except through you!!

Hence, I challenge the validity of the composition of the C.C. and of its last meeting (at which the "declaration" was adopted). This would entitle me to leave your proposal that I join the editorial board of the C.O. unanswered. But I take this proposal as emanating not from the C.C. but from three members of the Party, and I consider it my duty to give a reasoned reply, the more so since you say it is the wish of the editors of the central organ, stated in written form to you, that I become a member of the editorial board.

You believe that my joining the editorial board of the C.O.

"would secure almost complete peace in the Party, which I am so anxious to have." This "almost" of yours is highly characteristic! Yes, I am anxious to have peace in the Party; in December 1903 I made an offer of peace in the press, in a letter to the editors of *Iskra* ("Why I Resigned from the Editorial Board of *Iskra*"¹). I made another official offer of peace to the Party Council in January 1904. Peace was not accepted on the terms I offered at that time in the name of the majority. I may remark that, contrary to the present fashion of uttering hypocritical phrases about "peace," when by peace is meant surrendering to the minority on all points, completely ignoring the majority and forgetting all about the Congress, I stated quite definitely before the Council what I understood by peace in the Party. I and my fellow delegate of the C.C. to the Council plainly stated that by peace we meant purging the ideological struggle of all disputes about precedence, squabbles and other dishonest methods of struggle. Let the C.O. remain under the control of the minority and the C.C. under the control of the majority—I proposed at that time—let us appeal to everyone to stop all boycotting, all squabbling about precedence and co-optation, and let us in a comradely way discuss our disagreements and the causes of our disagreements at the Congress, let us train the Party honestly and in a dignified way to examine internal controversies. My appeal was ridiculed by Plekhanov and Martov. I am not at all surprised that they have adopted the disgraceful decision to withhold publication of the minutes of the Council (in spite of the insistence of the minority on the Council, *viz.*, two representatives of the C.C.), or that the three members of the C.C. should now (secretly) endorse that decision. Those who try to achieve a hypocritical peace by taking advantage of accidents that are unavoidable in the lives of Russian revolutionaries, and by kicking out of the C.C. those who think differently from them,² will also necessarily be anxious to conceal from Party members the attempt

¹ In this volume, pp. 380-87.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² This refers primarily to Comrade Ossipov. And, secondly, of course, to myself, for the proposal that I join the editorial board of the C. O. is equivalent to a proposal that I resign from the C. C.

to achieve an opportune and honourable peace. Fortunately I have reason to believe that this miserable contrivance, intended to deceive the Party, will fail, and that after all the minutes of the Council meeting will be published.*

Immediately after the editors who had usurped control of the Council scornfully rejected my peace proposal, I stated that I considered a congress to be the only honest way out. The tactics of the minority (including Plekhanov) are to keep control of the editorial board of the C.O. and of the Council, to pretend to represent the interests of the Party as a whole on these central bodies, and at the same time to try to secure, without a congress, the reorganisation of the C.C. in the interests of the minority. I cannot regard these tactics as honest fighting. I have never entered into any bargains with supporters of tactics like these, and do not consider it possible to enter into any. Besides, since last January the political complexion of the new *Iskra* has become sufficiently clear; it is the central organ of scandal and squabbling, of muddleheadedness in arguments and of flirting with opportunists, of settling personal accounts and fishing for dissensions. That the new *Iskra* is the organ of a circle, the organ of a new "trend," is clear to everyone, even to the editors themselves, who at first tried to vindicate "continuity," but have now adopted the course of systematically spitting at the old *Iskra*. The question is, in what sense can we speak of peace today? If by peace we mean purging the ideological struggle of squabbles about co-optation, I am even now fully prepared to agree to peace and to repeat the proposal I made in the Council. But if by peace we mean the cessation of the ideological struggle, conciliation with the trend, or rather with the political complexion which has no trend, of the new *Iskra*, then such a "peace" can only be proposed by unprincipled people, or by hypocrites, or by those for whom the organs of the Party are so much newsprint (*Druckerschwärze*, printer's ink, as one of the "conciliators" called the literature of the new *Iskra*). If the editors of the new *Iskra*, who have reduced all their positions "on principle" to personal attacks on me, to the persecution of what they have christened "Leninism,"

and to fishing for points of difference with me, if they now express the wish to see me a member of the editorial board, it only means that they do not take their own writings seriously, that all their polemics were only invented for the sake of "co-optation," and that they are prepared to throw all their new "principles" overboard now that co-optation has been safely secured. As for me, I reject as unworthy the very suggestion that the majority give up the Party struggle for its position, its struggle for a consistent trend, its struggle against the circle spirit. I regard it as my inalienable right and duty to carry on this struggle jointly with the supporters of the principles of the majority, whose number in Russia is growing. I believe that the struggle must be carried on openly, because nine-tenths of the history of the conflict has already been made public, and all further attempts to conceal it from the eyes of the world would prolong the crisis in a petty and absurd way.

You write that "many committees, too, undoubtedly wish" me to join the present editorial board of *Iskra*. I regret to have to state that in this too you are uttering a deliberate untruth. In the present condition of the struggle, no committee has as yet expressed such a wish. It has only been expressed by the editorial circle of the C.O. and by three members of the C.C. who consider it the acme of political wisdom to join the minority in abusing the majority and the majority in abusing the minority. I believe that my duty is to heed, not the will of certain politicians, but the will of the Party, which has laid down a method for giving formal expression to its will, *viz.*, a congress. I believe that a leader who adopted a definite line at the Congress and led a section of the Party in the direction of that line would lose every claim to respect or even to have his words taken seriously if he deserted to the side of his opponents.

Your reference to "many committees" is very instructive and significant, in spite of its . . . complete divergence from the truth. It testifies to the fact that you have still preserved a shred of Party conscience, that you still realise to some extent that official institutions appointed by the Party must comply with the will of the Party when they undertake to reconstitute the centres

and to change their policy. If this consciousness were not obscured in you by the confused position you have adopted, you would have no difficulty in seeing that there is no other way of really ascertaining the real desire of really numerous committees, than by convening a congress. But while your reference to "many committees" betrays in you a shred of Party conscience it also very clearly testifies to an uneasy conscience. You dread a congress above all things, because you realise the crying contradiction between your irresponsible policy and the will of the Party.

My general remarks about the hypocrisy of the attempts at conciliation you are making are fully confirmed by a number of additional facts. Three members of the C.C. now admire the "high level" of the C.O., while last March *these very* three members of the C.C. drew up a statement expressing regret that certain Party writers (the majority of the present editorial board of the C.O.) should have dropped into opportunism. While speaking about "peace" these three members of the C.C. dissolve the Southern Bureau (a collegium of agents of the C.C.*) because supporters of the majority had worked in it and had had the insolence to agitate in favour of a congress. While speaking about peace between the two opposing sides the three members of the C.C. hold a conference with representatives of one side, but ignore the other.** What demoralisation is introduced into the Party by these private and privy transactions which affect the basic interests of the whole Party and which are so carefully kept secret from it, although there is no need whatever for conspirative secrecy! What a mass of mutual distrust and suspicion is introduced in Party life by these tricks behind the back of the Party! Only today I received a letter from a comrade in Russia who writes about the rumours that are circulated concerning these transactions: it is said in Party circles that three sections have been formed among the minority; one demands first of all that Dan and Trotsky be co-opted to the Central Committee, and will not listen to anything short of that; the second agrees to a conference; the third will be satisfied with a simple declaration on the part of the C.C., and this section in-

cludes the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists (who very rightly interpret the establishment of a popular organ as a masked restoration of *Yuzhny Rabochy* which was dissolved by the Congress). I do not know what is true in this Party talk. But that the minority consists of various groups; that Comrade Brooker, for instance, most probably takes no part in the "ultimata" of the minority or in any of the squabbles about co-optation; that the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group presents a substantially different shade of opinion—are all well-known facts, with which everyone who has studied our Party Congress is familiar. Do you not see how humiliating is all this huckstering of separate groups that goes on behind the back of the Party! Is it surprising that the hypocrisy of three members of the Central Committee should make the majority which stands aloof from all these intrigues so completely distrustful of them? Is it surprising that the "peace" inaugurated by disbanding those who agitate for a congress is interpreted as a preliminary to the systematic manipulation of Party public opinion? Is it surprising that the majority suspects a deal between the C.C. and the C.O. (and, consequently, the Council) to put the minority on the committees by force and to withhold the publication of the resolutions of the majority (the St. Petersburg and Ekaterinoslav resolutions* which have been held up *for several months*), etc., etc.?

I hope you will now understand why, as long as the present situation in the Party lasts, there can be no thought of my joining the editorial board of the central organ.

Your statement that I "abstained" from voting on the question of co-opting three members of the C.C. is *not true*. I strongly protest against considering the "elections as having taken place." This is another breach of the rules. It is the *duty* of all three members of the Central Committee to consider my protest, and only *after that* can they raise the question of co-optation. According to the rules, co-optation must be unanimous; I have never given my consent. Consequently, without the matter being brought before the Council there can be no talk about co-optation having taken place. The decision of the Council (if you irregularly bring up the question there before the consti-

tution of the C.C. has been examined by all the members of the C.C.) must be communicated to me together with the minutes of the Council.

I cannot share your regret at our having failed to meet. After your tricks with Comrade Ossipov and your attitude to your pledged word (agreement of May 26, 1904) I do not wish to have anything to do with you, except in a purely official way, and only in writing.

N. LENIN

Member of the C.C.

THE ZEMSTVO CAMPAIGN AND *ISKRA*'S PLAN * ¹

FOR PARTY MEMBERS ONLY

A LETTER to the Party organisations has just been issued bearing the signature of the editorial board of *Iskra* (and marked "for Party members"). Russia has never been within such easy reach of a constitution as she is today, say the editors, and they proceed to outline a detailed plan for a "political campaign," a plan to influence the liberal Zemstvo-ists who are petitioning for a constitution.

Before we analyse the new *Iskra*'s plan, which is exceedingly instructive, let us recall how the question of our attitude to the liberal Zemstvo-ists has been formulated in the Russian Social-Democratic Party in the past, since the working class movement arose. Everyone is aware that this was one of the questions on which, almost from the very beginning of the rise of the mass labour movement, a struggle arose between the "Economists" and the revolutionaries. The former went so far as to deny the existence of bourgeois democrats in Russia, and to ignore the task of the proletariat of influencing the opposition strata of society; at the same time, by narrowing the range of the political struggle of the proletariat, they, consciously or unconsciously, left the role of political leadership to the liberal elements of society and assigned to the workers the "economic struggle against the employers and the government." The adherents of revolutionary Social-Democracy in the old *Iskra* fought against this trend. This struggle can be divided into two main periods: the period before the appearance of the liberal journal *Osvobozhdeniye* and the

¹ In addition to the introduction, only chapters II, III and IV of this article are given in this edition, the last chapter being slightly abbreviated.—*Ed.*

period after that.¹ During the first period we directed our attack mainly against the narrowness of the Economists, we tried to "lead them up" to the fact, which they failed to note, of the existence of bourgeois democrats in Russia; we emphasised the task of giving the political activity of the proletariat the widest scope, of extending its influence to all strata of society, of its becoming the vanguard in the struggle for freedom. The more the adherents of the new *Iskra* grossly pervert the history of this period (see Trotsky's "Our Political Tasks," published by the editors of *Iskra*²), and the more they gamble on the young people of today not being familiar with the recent history of our movement, the more appropriate and necessary is it today to recall that period and its main features.

The appearance of *Osvobozhdeniye* marked the beginning of the second period in the old *Iskra*'s fight. When the liberals came out with a journal and a political programme of their own, the proletariat's task of influencing "society" was naturally changed: working class democrats could no longer confine themselves to trying to "shake up" the liberal democrats and to stirring up a spirit of opposition among them; it had to place revolutionary criticism of the half-hearted political attitude of liberalism, which was now so clearly revealed, at the corner-stone of its policy. Our attempts to influence the liberal strata took the form of repeatedly pointing out the inconsistency and the insufficiency of the political protest of the liberals (it is sufficient to recall *Zarya*'s criticism of Mr. Struve's preface to the Witte Memorandum³ and numerous articles in *Iskra*).

By the time the Second Party Congress was convened this new attitude of the Social-Democrats towards the liberals, who had now come out openly, had taken definite shape and was firmly established; no one questioned the existence of bourgeois democrats in Russia any longer, or whether the opposition movement should be supported (and the kind of support that should

¹ No. 1 of *Osvobozhdeniye* (*Liberation*), edited by Peter Struve, was published in Stuttgart, July 1 (June 18), 1902.—*Ed.*

² See note to page 405.*—*Ed.*

³ See article, "Persecution of the Zemstvo and the Hannibals of Liberalism," in the present volume.—*Ed.*

be given) by the proletariat. The only issue was how to formulate the Party's view of the question; and it will suffice if I point out that the views of the old *Iskra* found much more adequate expression in the resolution proposed by Plekhanov, which emphasised the anti-revolutionary and anti-proletarian character of the liberal *Osvobozhdeniye*, than in the confused resolution proposed by Starover, which on the one hand aimed (quite inopportunistly) at an "agreement" with the liberals, and, on the other hand, proposed for such agreements conditions that were fictitious and obviously such as the liberals could not carry out.¹

II

In speaking of the bogey that appeared to our editors in their dreams, we left out a characteristic little detail in their argument. The editors attacked the discrediting tactics that would tend to extract from the Zemstvo-ists "a formal promise to present our demands to the government."² Apart from the absurdities we have already drawn attention to, the very notion that "our" demands, the demands of working class democracy, should be presented to the government by the liberal democrats is a queer one. On the one hand, precisely because they are bourgeois democrats, the liberal democrats will never be able to understand "our" demands and to advocate them sincerely, consistently and resolutely. Even if our liberals gave, "voluntarily" gave, a formal promise to present our demands, they would, of course, fail to keep the promise and would deceive the proletariat. On the other hand, if we are strong enough to exercise serious influence on bourgeois democrats in general, and on Messieurs the Zemstvo-ists in particular, we are also strong enough to present our demands to the government independently.

The editors' queer idea is not a slip of the tongue, but the inevitable consequence of the confused position they have taken up on this issue. Listen: "The central focus and leading thread must be the practical task . . . of exercising impressive and org-

¹ See note to page 405.*—Ed.

² See last paragraph of note to page 475.*—Ed.

anised influence on the bourgeois opposition"; "the draft statement of the workers to a given organ of the bourgeois opposition" must contain "an explanation of the reasons why the workers, instead of approaching the government, approach an assembly of spokesmen of the opposition." To put the question in this way is a radical mistake. We, the party of the proletariat, must, of course, "approach all classes of the population," and openly and energetically champion our programme and our immediate demands before the whole of the people; we must try to present these demands to Messieurs the Zemstvo-ists too; but our central focus and leading thread must be pressure not on the Zemstvo-ists, but on the government. The editors of *Iskra* have turned the question of the focus upside down. The bourgeois opposition is merely bourgeois and merely an opposition precisely because it does not fight, because it has no programme of its own to which it gives unconditional support, because it stands between the two fighting parties (the government, and the revolutionary proletariat plus a very few supporters among the intelligentsia), and hopes to turn the outcome of this struggle to its own advantage. It follows that the hotter the struggle grows and the nearer the moment of the decisive battle draws, the more must we concentrate our attention and direct our pressure on our actual enemy, and not on an ally who is *notoriously* an ally with reservations, a problematic and unreliable ally, a semi-ally. It would be wrong to ignore this ally, it would be absurd to try to intimidate and frighten him—but all this is so obvious that it seems queer to insist on it. But, I repeat, the central focus and leading thread of our agitation must not be pressure on this ally, but preparation for the decisive battle against the enemy. While it has been flirting with the Zemstvo and made some paltry concessions to it, the government has not yet made a single concession to the people; the government is still in a position to revert to (or rather to continue) its reactionary course, as has been the case in Russia tens and hundreds of times after the momentary liberal inclinations of this or that autocrat. It is precisely at a moment like this, when the Zemstvo is being flirted with and when the people are being

hoodwinked and lulled by empty words, that we must be particularly on our guard against the fox's brush, we must with particular insistence remind everybody that the enemy has not been defeated yet, we must call with particular energy for the continuation and the tenfold intensification of the fight against the enemy, and not shift the centre of gravity from "approaching" the government to approaching the Zemstvo. It is precisely at the present moment that all the notorious cream skimmers and traitors to liberty go out of their way to concentrate the attention of society and of the people on the Zemstvo and to inspire confidence in the Zemstvo, which does not in the least deserve the confidence of genuine democracy. Take *Novoye Vremya*¹: in the article quoted above you will find the following piece of reasoning: "It is clear to everyone that from the moment it becomes possible fearlessly and truthfully to discuss our defects and shortcomings and for every public man to act freely, it will not be long before we see the last of those shortcomings, and before Russia is able without apprehension to take that path of progress and improvement which she needs so badly. We need not even trouble to invent the organisation, the instrument that will bring about this progress: it exists already in the form of the Zemstvo, which needs only [!!] the freedom to grow; therein lies the guarantee of an improvement that will be native, and not borrowed." Language like this not only "conceals the desire for a limited monarchy and a constitution based on a property franchise" (as the editors put it in another passage of their letter); it simply prepares the ground for confining the whole business to smiles for the Zemstvo, without even limiting the monarchy in the least!

To insist on pressure being brought on the Zemstvo as the central focus, instead of pressure on the government, naturally gives rise to the unfortunate idea which lay at the basis of Starover's resolution—the idea of trying to find, at once and without delay, a basis for an "agreement" with the liberals. "In relation to the present Zemstvos," the editors say in their letter, "our

¹ *New Times*, the most influential reactionary paper, which chiefly expressed the views of the government.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

task reduces itself [!!] to presenting to them those practical demands of the revolutionary proletariat which they must support in order to be entitled to at least some right to speak in the name of the people and count on the active support of the working masses." A good definition of the tasks of a working class party, to be sure! At a time when an alliance between the moderate Zemstvo-ists and the government to fight the revolutionary proletariat is becoming possible and probable (the editors themselves admit the possibility of such an alliance), we are told that our task "reduces itself," not to the tenfold intensification of our efforts in the struggle against the government, but to the elaboration of the casuistic terms of an agreement with the liberals to render each other mutual support. If I present to another person demands which he pledges himself to support in order to be entitled to my support, the transaction cannot be described otherwise than as an agreement. And we ask everybody: what has become of the "terms" of the agreement with the liberals drawn up in Starover's resolution¹ (which was also signed by Axelrod and Martov), and the impracticability of which had already been predicted in our press? The editors' letter does not even mention these terms. The editors got the resolution passed at the Congress only to throw it into the wastepaper basket afterwards. At the very first attempt to tackle the matter in practice it became apparent that if Starover's "terms" were presented they would only provoke the Homeric laughter of Messieurs the liberal Zemstvo-ists.

Let us proceed further. Can we admit that it is right *in principle* to set the working class party the task of presenting to liberal democracy, or to the Zemstvo-ists, political demands "which they must support in order to be entitled to at least some right to

¹ Let us remind the reader that Starover's resolution, passed by the Congress (against my opinion and Plekhanov's), makes temporary agreements with the liberals subject to three conditions: 1) the liberals "will clearly and unambiguously announce that in their struggle with the government they unconditionally take the side of Social-Democracy"; 2) "they will not include in their programmes any demands that might run counter to the interests of the working class and democracy, in general, or obscure its class consciousness"; 3) "they will make universal, equal and direct suffrage and secret ballot the slogan of the struggle."

speak in the name of the people"? No, to do so would be wrong in principle, and would only lead to obscuring the class consciousness of the proletariat and to the most futile casuistry. To speak in the name of the people is to speak as a democrat. Any democrat (and any bourgeois democrat) is entitled to speak in the name of the people, but only to the extent that he champions democracy consistently, resolutely and to the end. It follows that every bourgeois democrat has "at least some right to speak in the name of the people" (because, as long as he remains a democrat, every bourgeois democrat champions some democratic demands), but at the same time no bourgeois democrat is entitled to speak in the name of the people all along the line (for today no bourgeois democrat is capable of resolutely carrying democracy through to the end). Mr. Struve is entitled to speak in the name of the people in so far as *Osvobozhdeniye* fights against the autocracy; but Mr. Struve has no right to speak in the name of the people in so far as *Osvobozhdeniye* writhes and wriggles, confines itself to a constitution based on a property franchise, puts the Zemstvo opposition on a par with struggle, and avoids formulating a consistent and clear democratic programme. The German National-Liberals* were entitled to speak in the name of the people in so far as they advocated the freedom of moving from place to place. The German National-Liberals had no right to speak in the name of the people in so far as they supported the reactionary policy of Bismarck.

It follows that to set the working class party the task of presenting demands to Messieurs the liberal bourgeoisie, by supporting which they would acquire the right to speak in the name of the people, is to invent a futile and absurd task. There is no need for us to invent any special democratic demands apart from those that are contained in our programme. In the name of that programme it is our duty to support any democrat (and this includes any bourgeois democrat) in so far as he champions democratic principles; it is our duty ruthlessly to expose every democrat (and this includes the Socialist-Revolutionary) in so far as he deviates from democratic principle (as, for instance, in such questions as the freedom of the peasant to leave the

commune or to sell his land). To attempt to determine beforehand the measure, so to say, of permissible turpitude, to attempt to fix beforehand what deviations from democratic principles are permissible for a democrat, is such a clever idea that we are tempted to suspect that either Comrade Martynov or Comrade Dan must have had a hand in helping our editors to produce it.

III

After expounding their leading political arguments in their letter, the editors proceed to expound the details of their great plan.

The Gubernia Zemstvo Assemblies are to petition for a constitution. In the towns of N, X, Y, our committeemen plus the advanced workers are to draw up a plan for a political campaign "according to Axelrod." The central focus of all agitation is to be: influencing the bourgeois opposition. An organisation group is to be elected. The organisation group is to elect an executive committee. The executive committee is to elect a special spokesman. Efforts are to be made "to bring the masses in touch with the Zemstvo Assemblies, to concentrate the demonstration around the very premises where the Zemstvo councillors sit. Some of the demonstrators are to penetrate into the meeting room; at the proper moment, the spokesman specially appointed for this purpose is to ask the Assembly [? ask the Marshall of Nobility who presides at the Assembly?] for permission to read out the statement of the workers. If this is refused the spokesman is to enter a vehement protest against the Assembly which presumes to speak in the name of the people, but refuses to hear the voices of the representatives of the people."

Such is the new *Iskra's* new plan. We shall see presently how modestly it is appraised by the editors themselves, but let us first quote the highly principled explanations of the editors concerning the function of the executive committee:

"... The executive committee must take measures beforehand to *prevent* the appearance of several thousand workers in front of the premises where the Zemstvo councillors sit and of several dozens or hundreds in the building itself *from causing panic* [!!] *among the Zemstvo-ists* under the influence of which they would be capable of throwing

themselves [!] upon the shameful protection of the police and the Cossacks, and thus transform a peaceful demonstration into a disgraceful fracas and a savage assault and distort its meaning. [The editors apparently believed in the reality of the bogey that appeared to them in their dreams. In fact, in the literal grammatical meaning of the phrase, the editors seem to imply that the Zemstvo-ists will transform the demonstration into an assault and thus distort its meaning. We have a very poor opinion of the Zemstvo liberals, but the panicky terror of the editors lest the liberals in a Zemstvo assembly call the police and the Cossacks seems to us to be quite ridiculous. Anyone who has ever been in a Zemstvo Assembly will know that police will be called for, if there is a so-called breach of the peace, either by the presiding Marshall of Nobility, or by the police officer who is unofficially present in the next room. Or do the members of the executive committee intend to explain to the police officer that it is not part of the "plan" of the editors of the new *Iskra* to transform a peaceful demonstration into a savage assault?]

"... In order to avoid such a surprise the executive committee must inform the liberal councillors beforehand . . . [so that they might give a "formal promise" not to call for the Cossacks?] of the forthcoming demonstration and of its true object. . . . [i.e., to inform them that it is not our true object to be savagely assaulted and thus have the meaning of Axelrod's plan distorted] . . . Furthermore, it must try to reach some kind of agreement [listen!] with the representatives of the Left wing of the bourgeois opposition and to secure, if not their active support, at any rate, their sympathy with our political action. The negotiations must, of course, be conducted in the name of the Party on the instructions of workers' circles and meetings, which should not only discuss the general plan of the political campaign, but also hear reports of its progress—the rules of secrecy being, of course, strictly observed."

Yes, yes, we can see with our own eyes that Starover's great idea of an agreement with the liberals on the basis of precisely defined conditions is growing and becoming stronger at a furious rate. It is true that all these definite conditions have been shelved "for the time being" (we are not sticklers for form, are we!), but on the other hand an agreement is being arrived at without delay, *viz.*, *an agreement not to cause panicky fear.*

Whichever way one looks at the editors' letter one cannot read any other meaning into the notorious "agreement" with the liberals than the one we have pointed to, *viz.*, either it is an agreement about the terms that would entitle the liberals to speak in the name of the people (and in that case the very idea of concluding such an agreement very seriously compromises the Social-Democrats who advance it), or else it is an agreement not to cause panic, an agreement to sympathise with a peaceful dem-

onstration—and in that case it is just rubbish which can hardly be discussed seriously. The absurd idea of the central importance of bringing pressure to bear upon the bourgeois opposition rather than upon the government could not result in anything but an absurdity. If we are able to organise an imposing mass workers' demonstration in the hall of a Zemstvo Assembly, of course, we shall do so (although when we have sufficient forces for a mass demonstration it will be much better not to "concentrate" these forces in front of "the premises" of the Zemstvo Assembly, but rather in front of the premises of the assemblies of the police, of the gendarmes or of the censors). But to be guided on that occasion by such considerations as the panic of the Zemstvo people, and to carry on negotiations to that effect, is the height of folly, the height of absurdity. The very *content* of a speech by a consistent Social-Democrat will always and inevitably rouse panicky fear among a large number, probably among the majority, of the Russian Zemstvo-ists. Parleys with the Zemstvo-ists about the undesirability of *that* sort of panic would place one in a very false and undignified position. Panicky fear of another kind will inevitably be caused by the savage assault or by the prospect of it. It would be very foolish to start negotiations concerning this panicky fear with the Zemstvo-ists, because even the most moderate liberal will neither call for such an assault nor sympathise with it; but this matter is beyond his control. What we want is not "negotiations," but the practical preparation of forces, not pressure on the Zemstvo-ists, but pressure on the government and on its agents. If we have no force behind us, it is better not to hold forth at all about great plans; but if we have the force, then we must oppose this force to the Cossacks and the police, we must try to gather a crowd of such dimensions and in such a spot as will enable it to repel, or at least to deter, the onslaught of the Cossacks and the police. And if we are capable of exercising, in deeds and not in words, "impressive organised influence upon the bourgeois opposition," it will, of course, not be by silly "negotiations" about not causing a panicky fear, but by force, the force of mass resistance to the Cossacks and the tsarist

police, the force of a mass offensive capable of growing into a popular insurrection.

The editors of the new *Iskra* take a different view of these matters. They are so pleased with their plan of an agreement and negotiations that they cannot find enough praise to lavish upon it.

The active demonstrators must be "imbued with an understanding of the fundamental difference between an ordinary demonstration against the police, or against the government (in general, and a demonstration, the immediate object of which is to fight absolutism by the revolutionary proletariat directly influencing the political tactics [so that's how it is!] of the liberal elements at the *present* [italicised by the editors] moment. . . . In order to organise a demonstration of the usual, so to say, general democratic [!!!] type, a demonstration which does not set itself the immediate aim of concretely opposing the revolutionary proletariat to the liberal bourgeois opposition as two different political forces, the mere presence of strong political ferment among the masses is quite sufficient It is the duty of our Party to utilise this state of mind of the masses even for this inferior type [hear! hear!] of mobilisation of the masses against absolutism. . . . We are taking our first [!] steps on a new [!] path of political activity, on the path of organising this kind of planned intervention of the working masses [N.B.] in public life, the immediate object of which is to oppose them to the bourgeois opposition as an independent force, opposed to it as regards class interests, but which, nevertheless, offers it terms [what terms?] for a combined energetic struggle against the common enemy."

It is not given to everybody to appreciate the profundity of this remarkable disquisition. The Rostov demonstration,* at which the aims of socialism and the demands of workers' democracy were expounded before an audience of thousands and thousands of workers, is an "inferior type of mobilisation," the ordinary, *general democratic* type, it does not concretely oppose the revolutionary proletariat to the bourgeois opposition. But when a spokesman specially appointed by an executive committee, which is elected by an organisation group, which is formed by the committeemen and active workers—when that spokesman, after preliminary negotiations with the Zemstvo-ists, utters a loud protest in the Zemstvo Assembly against their refusal to hear him—that will be opposing two independent forces in a "concrete" and "direct" way, that will be exercising "direct" influence on the tactics of the liberals, that will be "a first step on the new path." For God's sake, gentlemen! Martynov himself in the

worst days of *Rabocheye Dyelo* was never quite as vulgar as this!

The mass meetings of workers in the streets of the Southern towns, dozens of working class speakers, direct encounters with the real force of tsarist autocracy—all this is an “inferior type of mobilisation.” An agreement with the Zemstvo-ists about our speaker making a peaceful speech, after having pledged himself not to cause panic among Messieurs the liberals—that is a “new path.” Here you have, then, the new tactical tasks, the new tactical ideas of the new *Iskra*, which have been announced to the world with such pomp by the editorial Balalaykin.* On one point this Balalaykin has unwittingly spoken the truth: there is, indeed, a gulf between the old and the new *Iskra*. The old *Iskra* had no other words but words of contempt and ridicule for people who are capable of going into ecstasies over a theatrically staged agreement between classes, as if it were a “new path.” We have long been familiar with *this* particular new path, thanks to the experience of those French and German Socialist “statesmen” who also regard the old revolutionary tactics as an “inferior type,” and are never tired of praising “planned and direct intervention in public life” in the form of agreements to allow working class speakers to make peaceful and modest speeches after negotiations with the Left wing of the bourgeois opposition.

The panicky fear of the liberal Zemstvo-ists fills the editors with such panicky fear that they insistently recommend “particular caution” to those who are to take part in the “new” plan they have invented.

“As an extreme case in the sense of external caution when actually carrying out the action,” says the letter, “we visualise the sending of the workers’ statement by mail to the homes of the councillors and scattering a considerable number of copies in the Zemstvo Assembly hall. Only from the point of view of bourgeois revolutionism [*sic!*], which regards the external effect as everything and the process of the planned development of class consciousness and initiative of the proletariat as nothing, can one be embarrassed by this.”

We are not the sort of people to be embarrassed by the mailing or the scattering of leaflets, but we shall certainly always

be embarrassed by stilted and hollow phrase-mongering. To make the mailing and scattering of leaflets the occasion for talking with a serious air about the process of planned development of the class consciousness of the proletariat one must be a veritable hero of smug banality. To shout from the housetops about the new tactical tasks, only to reduce it all to the mailing and scattering of leaflets, is indeed priceless. It is exceedingly characteristic of the representatives of the intellectual shade in our Party, who are now hysterically rushing about in search of a new tactical catchword, now that their new organisational catchwords have ended in fiasco. And yet, with their usual modesty, they talk about the vanity of external effects. But don't you see, my dear sirs, that at best, even in the event of your alleged new plan being entirely successful, the only thing a workingman, speaking before an assembly of Messieurs the Zemstvo-ists, would attain would be precisely the external effect? And don't you see that it is impossible to talk of such a speech exercising "impressive" influence on "the tactics of the liberal elements" except by way of a joke? Is it not the other way round? Have not the mass demonstrations of the workers, which you think are mere demonstrations "of the usual, general democratic lowest type," exercised really impressive influence on the tactics of the liberal elements? And if the Russian proletariat is destined once again to exercise influence on the tactics of the liberals, believe me, it will be by a mass offensive against the government, and not by agreements with the Zemstvo-ists.

IV

The Zemstvo campaign, launched with the gracious permission of the police, the sweet speeches of Svyatopolk-Mirsky and of the government press, the rising tone of the liberal press, the animation of what is known as educated society—all these things impose the most serious tasks upon the workers' party. But these tasks are quite perversely formulated in the letter of the editors of *Iskra*. Today, more than ever, the proletariat must concentrate its political activity on organising impressive influence on the government, and not on the liberal opposition,

Agreements between the workers and the Zemstvo-ists concerning peaceful demonstrations—agreements which will inevitably degenerate into the staging of musical comedy effects—are less than ever appropriate at the present time. The consolidation of the advanced revolutionary elements of the proletariat in preparation for a decisive struggle for freedom is more urgent than ever at the present time. Precisely now, when our constitutional movement is beginning to reveal the ancient sin of all bourgeois liberalism, and of Russian liberalism in particular—excessively involved phrases, the misuse of words which do not correspond to deeds, a purely philistine trustfulness in the government and in every hero of foxy policy—phrases about the undesirability of frightening and striking panic in the hearts of Messieurs the Zemstvo-ists, about a lever of reaction, etc., etc., are more tactless than ever. Now more than ever is it necessary to strengthen in the revolutionary proletariat the firm conviction that the present “emancipation movement in society” will inevitably and certainly turn out to be as much of a soap bubble as has every preceding one, unless the force of the toiling masses, capable of and prepared for insurrection, intervenes.

The political excitement of the most varied strata of the people, which is the necessary condition for making insurrection possible and a token of its success, a token that the initiative of the proletariat will find support, is incessantly spreading, growing and becoming more acute. Consequently, it would be very unwise for anyone at this moment to begin shouting about immediately launching the attack, to begin calling for the formation of storm columns immediately, etc. The whole course of events is a guarantee that in the very near future the tsarist government will get into a still worse tangle and that the exasperation against it will become still more menacing. The government will get entangled in the game it has started with the Zemstvo constitutionalists. Whether it makes some paltry concessions, or whether it makes no concessions whatever, discontent and irritation will inevitably become still more widespread. The government will inevitably get into a tangle with its shameful and criminal Manchurian adventure, which will give rise

to a political crisis both in the event of a decisive military defeat and in the event of the war, so hopeless for Russia, dragging on.*

It is the business of the working class to widen and strengthen its organisation, to intensify its agitation among the masses tenfold, to take advantage of every vacillation of the government, to carry on propaganda in favour of insurrection, and, pointing to the example of all the halfway "steps" that were foredoomed to failure from the start, and about which so much fuss is now being made, to explain that insurrection is necessary. It goes without saying that the workers must respond to the Zemstvo petitions by calling meetings, scattering leaflets, organising demonstrations wherever it has sufficient forces to do so, in order to present all the Social-Democratic demands, regardless of the "panic" of Mr. Trubetskoy and his like,** and regardless of the outcry of philistines about a lever of reaction. And if we may risk speaking in advance, and from abroad at that, about the possible and desirable type of *mass* demonstrations (because demonstrations that are not mass demonstrations have no significance whatever), if we are to raise the question of the particular premises before which the forces of the demonstrators should be concentrated, we should point to the premises in which the police business connected with fighting the working class movement is transacted, we should point to the premises of the police, gendarme and censorship offices, to the places of confinement of political "offenders." The workers must lend serious support to the Zemstvo petitions, not by concluding agreements about the terms on which the Zemstvo might be allowed to speak in the name of the people, but by striking a blow at the enemies of the people. And we can scarcely doubt that the idea of such a demonstration will find sympathy among the proletariat. The workers hear stilted phrases and loud promises from all sides. They see the real—insignificant but nevertheless real—extension of liberty for society (a slackening of the bridle on the Zemstvos, the return of banished Zemstvo-ists, relaxation of the censor's ferocity towards the liberal press), but the workers see nothing whatever that extends their liberty to carry

on *their* political struggle. Under pressure of the revolutionary onslaught of the *proletariat* the government has allowed the *liberals* to talk a little about liberty! The lack of rights and the downtroddenness of the slaves of capital become more strikingly obvious to the proletarians. The workers have neither ubiquitous organisations for the relatively free (by Russian standards) discussion of political matters, nor any rooms to hold meetings in, the workers have no newspapers of their own, and their exiled and imprisoned comrades have not been restored to them. The workers are beginning to see that the skin of the bear—which they have not yet killed, but which only they, only the proletarians, have seriously wounded—is beginning to be divided by Messieurs the liberal bourgeoisie. The workers see that Messieurs the liberal bourgeoisie, as they start dividing the anticipated skin, are already snapping their teeth and snarling at the “extremist parties,” at the “enemies at home,” the relentless enemies of bourgeois rule and bourgeois peace. And the workers will rise still more fearlessly, in still greater numbers, to finish the bear, to conquer by force for *themselves* that which Messieurs the liberal bourgeoisie promise to give them as charity—the freedom of assembly, the freedom of the workers’ press, complete political liberty for the wide and open struggle for the complete victory of socialism.

Written in November 1904.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

EXPLANATORY NOTES

PAGE 3.* *Iskra*—*Spark*. The idea that it was necessary to establish a political newspaper occurred to Lenin when he belonged to the St. Petersburg League of Struggle (see *What Is To Be Done?*, page 54), and he again thought about it when he was in exile in Siberia. Lenin took part in the unsuccessful attempt to revive the Kiev *Rabochaya Gazeta* (*Workers' Gazette*), which was adopted as the central organ by the First Congress of the Party, and he was even nominated for the post of editor. At the beginning of 1900, when Lenin and other old members of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle returned from exile, a conference was held in the town of Pskov, which included Lenin, Martov, Potresov and Radchenko, representing the Social-Democrats, and Struve and Tugan-Baranovsky, representing the "legal Marxists," to discuss the question of issuing a newspaper (the future *Iskra*). The Emancipation of Labour group was also invited to join in issuing the paper.

In August 1900, Lenin and Potresov travelled to Switzerland for the purpose of arranging for the publication of the paper, and while there, they carried on negotiations with the Emancipation of Labour group. These negotiations nearly came to nought owing to the attitude of Plekhanov, who feared that if the editorial board were situated in Germany, as was intended, it would be beyond the control of the group and of himself as the actual leader of the group. (Cf. "How the 'Spark' Was Nearly Extinguished," *Collected Works*, Vol. IV, Book 1, p. 23.)

Iskra began publication in December 1900, in Munich, Germany. The editorial board consisted of Plekhanov, Axelrod and Vera Zasulich, representing the Emancipation of Labour group, and Lenin, Martov and Potresov, representing the Social-Democrats in Russia. Most of the editorial work was performed by Lenin, and Plekhanov and Martov wrote a great deal for it. N. K. Krupskaya acted as sub-editor from April 1901 onwards. Simultaneously with the publication of *Iskra*, a theoretical magazine *Zarya* (*Dawn*) was published, edited by the same board. In April 1902, *Iskra* began to be published in London.

Iskra immediately attracted the attention of the whole of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia. It was illegally smuggled into Russia and was read with avidity in Social-Democratic circles by professional revolutionaries and by the workers.

Iskra, which was principally guided by Lenin, waged a ruthless struggle against Economism, against its repudiation of the political struggle,

its *khaostism*, i.e., dragging at the tail of the movement, and its primitive methods in matters of organisation. Gradually, the overwhelming majority of the local Social-Democratic organisations grouped themselves around *Iskra* and deserted the Economists. The followers of *Iskra* became the most active workers in the Social-Democratic movement: they distributed the paper, established new contacts with the workers, came to be the leaders of local committees, strove to win over every Social-Democratic organisation to the principles and tactics for which *Iskra* stood, and maintained contacts with the editors abroad.

Thanks to Lenin's guidance, *Iskra* became not only the militant, ideological centre of proletarian socialism, but also the practical, organising, Social-Democratic centre, around which the local organisations united. The part played by *Iskra* and the *Iskra* organisation in giving definite shape to the whole of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia is an exceptional one. It not only fought for the victory of the revolutionary Marxian trend in the Social-Democratic movement, but concentrated all the efforts of the Social-Democrats on the task of establishing a centralised, all-Russian Party organisation on the basis of Lenin's organisational principles. (On the role of the *Iskra* organisation and of *Iskra* in the formation of the Party and on the preparations for the Second Congress, see note to page 341* in this volume.)

Iskra reacted to all the fundamental questions of political life. It gave replies to the complicated questions of theory, tactics and organisation of the labour movement; it gave a definite evaluation of the relation of class forces in Russia, emphasised the enormous importance of the political struggle of the working class and also correctly defined the role of the various social groups and elements in the struggle against the autocracy. It closely watched the manifestations of the liberal opposition movement and untiringly fought against its half-heartedness; it explained and exposed the petty-bourgeois nature of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and championed proletarian socialism as against petty-bourgeois socialism. *Iskra* closely watched every fact concerning the mass labour and peasant movement.

Dealing with every aspect of the struggle of the working class in other countries, *Iskra*, under Lenin's guidance, strongly emphasised the international character of the labour movement and at the same time fought against international opportunism, revisionism, no less strenuously than it fought against the Russian variety, Economism. When the *Iskra* trend had become strong and had succeeded in winning the majority of the local organisations, *Iskra* began to make preparations for the Second Congress of the Party. It drew up a draft programme for the Party and in particular devoted a great deal of attention to the preparatory work for drafting an agrarian programme for the Party. The discussion of questions concerning the Party programme revealed a difference of opinion on the editorial board of *Iskra* between Lenin and Plekhanov. (Cf.

"Criticism of Plekhanov's Second Draft," pp. 231-33 in this volume.)

A number of the main postulates of the labour movement and of the proletarian party, which later formed part of the armoury of Bolshevism, were first formulated in the columns of *Iskra* by Lenin. At that time the influence of Lenin was felt very strongly in *Iskra*, and for that reason *Iskra* is quite correctly called the first real Bolshevik newspaper.

At the Second Congress of the Party, held in 1903, *Iskra* was adopted as the central organ of the Party. The controversy at the Congress over the composition of the editorial board of the paper was one of the reasons why the Party split into a majority and minority—hence the terms Bolshevik, which means those belonging to the majority, and Menshevik, which means those belonging to the minority. This in fact was a split into an orthodox, Marxian faction, the Bolsheviks, and an opportunist faction, the Mensheviks. In order to ensure single and firm guidance for the paper, Lenin proposed that an editorial board of three be elected, to consist of himself, Plekhanov and Martov. Martov and others, however, proposed that the old editorial board continue to serve. The Congress adopted Lenin's proposal, upon which Martov refused to serve on the board. The internal Party strife, which then began, and the ambiguous attitude adopted by Plekhanov, who submitted more and more to the pressure of the Mensheviks, caused Lenin also to resign from the board. Plekhanov was thus left in sole control of the paper. He co-opted all the previous members of the board, in this way surrendering *Iskra* to the Mensheviks; subsequently he joined their ranks himself. This brought the history of the old *Iskra*, which was a brilliant example of a consistent, Marxian revolutionary newspaper, to a close. In form and substance, *Iskra* became the organ of the Mensheviks.

Zarya (Dawn) was the theoretical organ of the *Iskra* group and began publication in the spring of 1901. This magazine published a number of important articles dealing with questions of programme and policy. Only four numbers of the magazine were published, one of which was a double number.

PAGE 4.* Lenin dealt with the Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl (Workers' Thought)* in "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy" (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. II), where he discussed in detail the leading article of that supplement entitled "Our Realities." The contention of that article was that that struggle was desirable which was possible under the present circumstances, and that it was the fight which the workers were already carrying on that was possible. It was further explained that two kinds of struggle were "possible": the "partial" struggle for the improvement of the position of the workers in an individual factory and the "political" struggle "for improving the position of all the workers, as for instance, by means of labour protection laws."

This passage shows that the opportunist standpoint of *Rabochaya Mysl*

reduced the political, as well as the economic, struggle to a struggle for gradual reforms. The idea of socialism was given an equally opportunist interpretation.

"... Socialism," said the leading article of the Special Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl*, "which is the outcome of the evolution of the social methods of modern production, and which inevitably leads to the complete socialisation (even on a world scale) of all its means, is merely the further and higher step in the development of 'modern society.'" Lenin pointed out that this obscured the goal of socialism; that this way of formulating the question (borrowed from Bernstein) would be endorsed by all the liberals and all the bourgeoisie—the enemies of socialism. It is perfectly clear, Lenin wrote, that the "editors of *Rabochaya Mysl* rank as socialism only the sort that can be obtained by peaceful, as distinct from revolutionary, means. To narrow socialism in this way and reduce it to common-or-garden bourgeois liberalism is a tremendous step backward, as compared with the views of all the Russian, and of the enormous, overwhelming majority of European Social-Democrats." "Of course, the working class would prefer to take power into its hands by peaceful means (we have already pointed out that this capture of power can be effected only by the organised working class that has graduated in the school of class struggle), but for the proletariat to reject the revolutionary capture of power would be folly both from the point of view of theory and of political practice, and would be tantamount to capitulation before the bourgeoisie and all the propertied classes." (*Collected Works*, Vol. II.)

PAGE 4.** The Self-Emancipation of the Working Class group was a small and uninfluential organisation. It arose in St. Petersburg in January 1899, and was organised by K. A. Popov, V. A. Kozhevnikov and Malinin (a worker). It was broken up by the police in April of that year. During its brief period of existence it drew up an appeal to the workers (mentioned and analysed by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?* [in this volume]), a set of rules and two or three manifestoes.

PAGE 5.* *Rabocheye Dyelo* (*Workers' Cause*), the organ of the League of Russian Social-Democrats, wrote: "We have become firmly convinced that the *Credo* merely represents the opinions of individuals, and only reflects the ideological muddle in the heads of its writers."

In a letter to N. K. Krupskaya, Lenin characterised the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists as follows: "The tactics of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists are the tactics of concealing the extremes of Economism, of defending Economism from direct attacks upon it, of permitting the free criticism of Marxism on the part of all the open and 'masked ideologists of the bourgeoisie.'"

PAGE 15.* An article published in *Rabocheye Dyelo* under the title "A Historical Change" provided Lenin with the occasion for exposing the lack of political principles of that group.

Just before that *Rabocheye Dyelo* had defended the opponents of the political struggle who regarded the fight against tsarism as having been instigated by intellectuals. *Rabocheye Dyelo* disputed the clause in the programme of the Emancipation of Labour group (1885), which said that the overthrow of tsarism must be the first political objective of the workers. *Rabocheye Dyelo* maintained that "today and in the near future—and still more so in 1885—the overthrow of absolutism *cannot be the 'first' political objective of the workers' groups.*" Political tasks in the real, *practical* sense of that word, *i.e.*, in the sense of co-ordinated and successful *practical* struggle for political demands, are beyond the understanding of workers' groups." *Rabocheye Dyelo* went on to admit that a working class movement which had assumed a mass character could carry on a political struggle. But for tactical considerations the task of overthrowing absolutism could not be put to this mass movement as its "*first*" political task.

After having made statements like these, the editors of *Rabocheye Dyelo* wrote the article, "A Historical Change," in which under the influence of the demonstrations and of the rise of the students' and workers' movements they made a *volte face* and asserted that the country was on the eve of a revolution. "If only our Party," they wrote, "had at its disposal a strong fighting organisation and adequate forces, it would be able to find firm ground for a '*direct and mass* attack against tsarism.'"

PAGE 17.* The question of terrorism as new tactics that should be adopted by the Social-Democrats was brought to the forefront by the Economists in the article "A Historical Change" which appeared in *Listok Rabochevo Dyela*, No. 6. In the beginning of 1901, terrorist acts became more frequent (Karpovich's attempt on the life of Bogolepov, the Minister of Education who had conscripted the students into the army, and Lagovsky's attempt on the life of Pobedonostsev, Procurator of the Holy Synod). This gave new life to terrorist tendencies. They commanded the sympathy of the Russian liberals, and even of many Socialist leaders in Western Europe. Even individual Social-Democrats were affected by the terrorist craze.

In "A Historical Change" (see preceding note), the editors of *Rabocheye Dyelo* wrote: "The shots of Karpovich and of Lagovsky and the warm sympathy they have met with on the part of the young people and of all the revolutionary elements in general are clear indications that with the inevitable force of a natural law the *White Terror* of the tsarist government is preparing the ground for the *Red Terror* of the revolutionaries."

Iskra repeatedly and emphatically pronounced itself against individual terrorism, and against the mistaken attitude of the Economists towards the question.

PAGE 17.** The events referred to by Lenin are the mass demonstrations of February and March 1901, which took the form of direct revolutionary action against the government. On March 4 (February 19), 1901, a demonstration took place in Kharkov; it was organised by the students and supported by the workers. On March 13 (February 28), there was a tremendous demonstration in Moscow which developed out of the students' disorders, and on March 17 (4), a students' demonstration took place in St. Petersburg, which met with sympathetic response throughout the length and breadth of Russia. It ended in a wholesale beating up of the demonstrators on the Kazan Square. The workers assimilated the political slogans in an unprecedentedly active way, though the demonstrations were for the most part spontaneous. At that time many of the Social-Democratic organisations were under Economist influence and reacted very feebly to these demonstrations; they regarded them as political action. Only the firm attitude of *Iskra* changed this state of affairs and the result was that the Social-Democrats headed the movement.

PAGE 25.* *What Is To Be Done?* This is one of the works of Lenin which must be read in order to understand the principles of Leninism and the history of the Party. Written in 1902, in the period of the acute struggle between the *Iskra*-ists and the Economists, in the period between the First and Second Congresses of the Russian Party, it served as a guide to the problems that confronted the Russian Party at that time, and serves as a guide to the problems that confront some of the Communist Parties in Europe and America today. On the eve of the Second Congress and the formation of the Bolshevik "trend of political thought in the Party" the question of the day was that of "defining the general principles and fundamental tasks of any Social-Democratic policy in general." (Lenin.)

An important problem that confronted the Party at that time was the problem of cadres, of building the Party apparatus. Today, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, when the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has grown into a mass proletarian party, the problem of cadres and of the Party apparatus is, in the main, solved in a different way from that in which it was solved in the pre-October days and particularly in the period dealt with in *What Is To Be Done?* Nevertheless, the idea of forming an "organisation of professional revolutionaries" that Lenin advanced in this pamphlet, in the main, still holds good today, as do the other organisational principles enumerated therein. Without this firm skeleton the Party would never have grown into the militant party it was and is, it would never have been able to lead the workers to vic-

tory in the proletarian revolution and guide the first country in the world that is building socialism. The old Leninist guard, which to this day personifies the solidarity, firmness and durability of the Party, was brought up in the traditions of the professional revolutionaries. The professional revolutionary is one who loyally devotes his whole life to the cause of the Party and of the working class.

The *Iskra* period, the ideas of which are summed up in this pamphlet, was the period in which the Party was still in the process of formation. A single centralised organisation that could weld the scattered Social-Democratic circles, working with primitive methods, into one whole was still lacking. The Economists insisted on working on the old primitive lines. Only by defeating the Economists was *Iskra* able to convene the Second Congress and lay the foundations for a centralised Party. The pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* played an enormous part in defeating the Economists. The problem of creating a centralised Party, with which, in the main, this pamphlet deals, was in Lenin's opinion "the main link" which, if grasped by the party of the proletariat, would enable it successfully to march further forward. The organisation of a centralised Party is an essential condition for the proper leadership of the working class. But not only that; the Party must be the vanguard of the working class and, moreover, it must be armed with a revolutionary theory.

In chapters one and two of *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin fights for a revolutionary theory in opposition to the views of the West European opportunists represented by Bernstein, who attempted to revise the principles of Marxism, as well as in opposition to the Russian followers of Bernstein, the "legal Marxists" and the Economists. Opportunist theories served the Economists as grounds for allowing themselves to become "absorbed in the narrowest forms of practical activity," for bowing before "spontaneity." Lenin fought against this.

The Economists strove to reduce the level of Party consciousness "to the level of understanding of the backward strata of the masses." They wanted to transform the Party from being the *leader*, the *vanguard* of the working class, into the rearguard dragging at the tail of the movement. That is why Lenin described the Economists as "*khvostists*," from the Russian word *khvost* which means tail. Bowing to spontaneity, to the lack of class consciousness of the labour movement, led to the repudiation of the need for an *independent* proletarian theory and tactics. This meant that the proletariat would be *subordinated* to bourgeois ideology and bourgeois politics. That is why Lenin laid particular emphasis on the exceptional importance of Marxian theory as a means of converting the spontaneous labour movement into a conscious socialist movement. Without a revolutionary theory, said Lenin, there can be no revolutionary practice, and he added, "the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of

the spontaneous growth of the labour movement" and it "could only be brought" in (into the movement) "from without." The opportunists attacked Lenin for these statements and accused him of underestimating the importance of the spontaneous labour movement and of having a non-Marxian conception of the origin of revolutionary theory. But in making these statements Lenin merely wished to emphasise the point that theory does not simply spring from the spontaneous labour movement, but is the result of a *scientific study* of the enormous and varied experience of the prolonged and stubborn struggles of the working class. Since, in capitalist society, science is not accessible to the working class, especially in the first stages of its development, the ideas of scientific socialism were "brought to them from without" by intellectuals, who adopted the point of view of the proletarian class struggle. In the initial stages of the labour movement, these intellectuals served as "revolutionary bacilli," as a ferment, which accelerated the ferment in the ranks of the working class and helped the workers to understand their class interests and the historic tasks of the proletariat as the fighter for socialism. This does not imply that Lenin separated the socialist theory from the working class movement, or opposed one to the other. On the contrary, he strongly emphasised the necessity for educating the workers' vanguard, the necessity for creating firm cadres of professional revolutionaries from the ranks of the workers. He merely strove to prove that without a vanguard party armed with a revolutionary theory, the mass of the workers would not be able to "train itself" to understand scientific socialism, that socialist ideology does not rise spontaneously from the labour movement.

The same thing must be said in regard to "spontaneity" and "consciousness." Lenin did not draw a hard and fast line between the two. The organised strike movement of the 'nineties can be described as a "conscious" movement as compared with the riots and the smashing of machinery which occurred in the 'sixties and the 'seventies. "This shows," said Lenin, "that the spontaneous element, in essence, represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an *embryonic form*." "Consciousness" is the appreciation of the class interests and historic tasks of the proletariat. Beginnings of this class consciousness in various degrees occur at various stages of the mass movement, but it cannot occur in its developed form, in the form of a socialist ideology, without the aid of the "theoreticians," without the aid of the "revolutionary bacilli." When the working class becomes mature enough to create its own *party*, this party determines the best tactics to adopt from the point of view of the class interests of the proletariat on the basis of a Marxian analysis, and *leads* the masses of the workers on the basis of these tactics.

Subsequently, Plekhanov, Martov, Potresov, Axelrod and the other colleagues of Lenin on *Iskra*, after their transition to the side of opportu-

ism, abandoned the consistent revolutionary views of the old *Iskra*, and although they had previously praised *What Is To Be Done?* very highly, they began to find various "Leninist heresies" in it. They tried to interpret the postulates in *What Is To Be Done?* on spontaneity and consciousness, and on an organisation of professional revolutionaries, to mean that Lenin was imposing upon the workers cadres of "guardians," who would convert the proletariat into their "ward," "restrict" its independence, strangle democracy and implant bureaucracy. Before the Second Congress Plekhanov defended the fundamental postulates enunciated in *What Is To Be Done?* against the Economists; but after the Second Congress he repeated the very things the Economists had said. When *What Is To Be Done?* was republished in the symposium *Twelve Years*, Lenin made no material changes in it but merely stated in the introduction to the symposium that *What Is To Be Done?* "controversially corrects Economism, and it would be wrong to study its contents outside of this task."

PAGE 27.* In June 1901 the representatives of five Social-Democratic groups working outside Russia met in Geneva with the object of discussing the formation of a single party. The groups were: 1) The League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad (*Rabocheye Dyelo* group); 2) The *Sotsial Demokrat* group (which included Plekhanov, Vera Zasulich, etc.); 3) the *Iskra* group; 4) the Foreign Committee of the Bund, and 5) the *Borba* group (which included D. Ryazanov, J. Steklov and E. Smirnov-Danevich). A resolution was passed condemning Economism, Bernsteinism and Millerandism, *i.e.*, all forms of Russian and international opportunism. The *Rabocheye Dyelo* group subsequently withdrew its support of the June resolution and adopted a clearly opportunist position on this issue.

PAGE 31.* The struggle between two tendencies, to which Lenin refers, is the struggle between revolutionary and opportunist socialism, which was the prelude to the struggle now going on between the Communist International and the social-fascists of the Second International. As early as 1908, Lenin foretold that this conflict of ideas would be transformed into an armed conflict. In 1902 when *What Is To Be Done?* was written, Lenin observed that the struggle between opportunism and revolutionary Marxism has "grown from a national into an international" struggle. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a struggle between two tendencies went on in the socialist movements in Germany, France, England and Russia, *i.e.*, between the revolutionary and proletarian tendency on the one hand, and the reformist and petty-bourgeois tendency on the other; but that struggle did not yet bear an international character.

In Germany, in the 'sixties and the 'seventies, a struggle proceeded between the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle and the Eisenachers, *i.e.*,

the German Marxists led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, who formed the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in the town of Eisenach in 1869. The principal question that divided these two parties was the question of the unification of Germany. "This unification," said Lenin, "could take place, with the relationship of classes prevailing at that time, in one of two ways: either by means of a revolution led by the proletariat, which would set up a united German republic, or by means of dynastic wars waged by Prussia, which would strengthen the hegemony of the Prussian landlords in united Germany. Lassalle and his followers, failing to see much chance of a proletarian and democratic solution of the problem, pursued the tactics of adapting themselves to the hegemony of the *Junkers*, led by Bismarck. The mistake they made was that they wanted to divert the labour movement to Bonapartist state socialist lines. On the other hand, Bebel and Liebknecht consistently fought for the democratic and proletarian solution and fought against the slightest concession to Prussianism, Bismarckism and nationalism." At the same time a struggle went on between the Lassalleans and Eisenachers on a number of other questions, but along the same lines, *i.e.*, the struggle between compromise with the ruling classes, in this case, the Prussian *Junkers* represented by the Bismarck government (the Lassalleans), and the tactics of the revolutionary class struggle (the Eisenachers). But this struggle did not extend beyond the boundaries of Germany.

In France, in the beginning of the 'eighties, a struggle began between the followers of Jules Guesde, who were adherents of the teachings of Marx, and the so-called Possibilists, the opportunists, who advised the workers to demand only that which was "possible" under the capitalist system. The questions in dispute were: the question of centralism or federalism in Party organisation and the question as to whether Socialists could take part in bourgeois municipal governments. Although these questions come within the category of programme and theoretical, as well as tactical, questions, nevertheless, these controversies did not assume an international character.

In England, in 1884, two organisations arose: one, consisting of Marxists, although they were far from being consistent Marxists (Hyndman, Tom Mann and others), called itself the Social-Democratic Federation, and the other, a social-reformist and actually a bourgeois party, called itself the Fabian Society, after the Roman general Fabius Cunctator, renowned for his cautious tactics. The Fabian Society was founded by a group of writers and professors who, in opposition to revolutionary Marxism, preached "municipal socialism" and the gradual, peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism by means of reforms carried through by the municipalities. The Fabians were also advocates of British imperialism. Owing to the fact that the British bourgeoisie was able to "bribe" the upper stratum of the British working class out of the

extra profits it made from the exploitation of the colonies, the propaganda of the Fabian Society made considerable headway, whereas the Social-Democratic Federation remained an unimportant body. But the struggle between tendencies in the British socialist movement bore the traces of the special features of the British labour movement.

The struggle between the Marxists and *Narodnaya Volya* in Russia also did not extend beyond the confines of the country, because at that time *Narodnaya Volya* and Narodism generally were a purely Russian phenomenon.

The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries marked the opening of the epoch of the domination of finance capital in the advanced countries of Europe. The younger capitalist countries began to overtake and surpass England, which hitherto had enjoyed a colonial monopoly and, as a consequence, had been able to create a large stratum of aristocrats of labour and what Lenin called "bourgeois labour politicians." Parallel with the growth of imperialism in other countries, favourable ground was created for the growth of opportunist ideas among the upper and better provided-for section of the working class. Opportunism became an international phenomenon. Opportunism became the agent of international imperialism in the working class movement. The fight between opportunism and revolutionary Marxism entered a new phase.

Lenin's remark at the end of the passage here commented on: "in this first really international battle with . . . opportunism" the revolutionary wing of the International must become strengthened, and an end will be put "to the political reaction that has long reigned in Europe," is profoundly interesting. Lenin here points to the connection between the new phase into which the struggle between the two tendencies in the labour movement had entered and the changes in world economics which put an end to the peaceful epoch of development of capitalism. This peaceful epoch commenced in 1871, after the suppression of the Paris Commune, and in Lenin's opinion it came to an end in 1904, i.e., the eve of the 1905 Revolution.

PAGE 31.** Bernstein, a German Social-Democrat who had displayed his opportunism as far back as the 'seventies, at the outset of his career. In the middle of the 'nineties he started an undisguised campaign against the very foundations of revolutionary Marxism. In a series of articles which subsequently appeared in book form under the title *Problems of Socialism*, he attempted to demonstrate theoretically the desirability of collaboration between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and evolved a theory of the peaceful development of capitalism into socialism, thus denying the necessity and inevitability of the class struggle of the proletariat and the necessity of the dictatorship of the latter. Thus, Bernstein said that collaboration was possible between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, while Millerand showed "how to do it" by joining a French bourgeois cabinet.

PAGE 33.* The allusion is to Krylov's fable *Two Barrels*, the moral of which runs: "He who never stops shouting about his own achievements is probably good for nothing."

PAGE 34.* In the course of the Great French Revolution of 1789-94, two mutually hostile parties arose. One was the party of the Gironde (named after the district of the Gironde), the other, the revolutionary party of the Jacobins (known also as the party of the Mountain, the *Montagnards*). The Girondists represented the capitalists and the middle-class bourgeois who demanded freedom based on private property, tried to avoid all sharp conflicts with the reactionary feudal elements and to find a common language with the ruling classes of foreign countries. The Jacobins, who were the party of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, were supported by petty-bourgeois strata of the population (including the artisans) and the urban poor. Far from being the champions of socialism, they consistently defended bourgeois property and were hostile to the Communists of the time. But they fought with the utmost determination for the complete victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and for the preservation and consolidation of its conquests. "The historians of the proletariat," Lenin wrote, "regard Jacobinism as one of the greatest *upheavals* of an oppressed class in its struggle for liberation. The Jacobins gave France the best models of a democratic revolution repelling the coalition of monarchs against the republic." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XX.) When the revolution was jeopardised by the attack of the united forces of the feudal countries of Western Europe, when, at home, the counter-revolutionary nobility raised its head and the bourgeoisie, anxious to oust the Jacobins, entered into an agreement with the former, the Jacobins replied not only by organising a revolutionary war against the counter-revolution from without, but also by establishing a ruthless reign of terror directed against the aristocrats and against the bourgeoisie that had betrayed the revolution. The terror was extended by the Jacobins to the Girondists, as a party of compromise with the counter-revolution. When Plekhanov (who himself was very soon, after the Second Congress, to become the leader of the opportunist wing of the Russian Social-Democrats) during the struggle against the Economists wrote, in an article entitled "On the Threshold of the Twentieth Century," of the possibility of a Mountain and a Gironde in the working class movement, he was thinking of the struggle between the opportunists and the revolutionary wing of the Social-Democrats.

PAGE 34.** *Bez Zaglaviya* (*Without a Title*) was the name of a journal, which appeared in 1906; hence, the group that edited this journal was known as *Bezzaglavtsi*. Its views were closely related to those of the Cadets. The group included former Economists, such as E. Kuskova, S. N. Prokopovich and others.

PAGE 35.* Textbooks of history by Ilovaysky were in use before the revolution. Their object was to educate the students in a spirit of monarchism and of Russian imperial jingoism. The textbook made no attempt to give a scientific interpretation of the facts of history. Its standpoint was that history consists of the acts of kings and that kings are appointed by God.

An attitude to history from the Ilovaysky point of view is a superficial and unscientific attitude.

PAGE 35.** In 1878 the Reichstag on a motion introduced by Bismarck passed an exceptional law against the Socialists, known as the Anti-Socialist Law, which declared the Social-Democratic Party to be illegal and membership of it a punishable offence. As long as this law remained in force the German Social-Democratic Party was compelled to go underground. While underground, however, it built up a well-disciplined Party organisation capable of carrying on work among the masses, and took advantage of all available legal opportunities. The government did not succeed in destroying the Party, and the latter's influence on the working class grew enormously. The Anti-Socialist Law was repealed (or rather the Reichstag refused to allow a further extension of it) in 1890. The repeal of the law was an indication of the increased strength of the German proletariat which the ruling class was forced to reckon with.

PAGE 36.* The "Socialists of the Chair" (German: *Kathedersozialisten*) were one of the varieties of bourgeois social reformism. They were mainly professors of the German universities, whence their name. Their contention was that class contradictions could be eliminated by means of social reforms and these must be carried out by the state, whose duty it was to restrict undue exploitation on the part of the capitalists and to improve the position of the workers without any class struggle. "Chair-socialism" was one of the attempts on the part of the bourgeoisie to "refute" the Marxian theory of the class struggle; it tried to subject the working class to the influence of the bourgeoisie by idealising the bourgeois state as a force above classes which guards the interests of "justice" and defends the interests of the workers.

PAGE 36.** In 1899 the Socialist Millerand joined the French bourgeois cabinet and put into practice the opportunist policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. That policy was strongly condemned by Russian *Iskra*-ism with Lenin at its head, as well as by all the more or less consistent Marxian elements in the international Social-Democratic movement (e.g., the Guesdists in France). But the leading groups of the Second International and of the German Social-Democratic Party, which adopted a conciliatory, centrist position, condemned it in a very qualified way. At the Paris Congress of the Second International in 1900, they supported

Kautsky's "elastic" resolution and got it passed, as against the resolution moved by Guesde. In the ranks of the Right-wing opportunists, the policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and with its government, of course, found unqualified approval. Millerand's entry into the cabinet was welcomed by Jaurès, the representative of the opportunist section of the French Socialists, by the German Bernsteinists, and also by *Rabocheye Dyelo*, in an article by Krichevsky, which is here referred to by Lenin.

PAGE 36.*** "Historical in the Nozdrev sense"—the allusion is to Nozdrev, a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, who continually got into trouble.

PAGE 36.**** At the Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party in Hanover in October 1899, the question of the revisionist position of Bernstein (who had just published a series of articles and brought out his book [see note to page 31**]) was specially discussed. A resolution was passed which ended with the following:

"The Party sees no reason for changing its main demands, its fundamental views, its tactics and its very name, *i.e.*, for turning the Social-Democratic Party into a democratic-socialist party of reform; the party emphatically rejects every attempt to obscure or change its attitude towards the existing political and social order and towards the bourgeois parties."

At the Lübeck Congress (September 1901) when the same question came up, the following resolution was passed, in answer to the opportunists' demand for "freedom of criticism":

"The Congress recognises the absolute need for self-criticism for the further spiritual development of our Party. But the highly one-sided sort of criticism to which Comrade Bernstein has devoted himself during the past few years, while abstaining at the same time from all criticism of bourgeois society and of its representatives, has placed him in an ambiguous position and has evoked the resentment of the majority of the comrades. Hoping that Comrade Bernstein realises this and will change his behaviour accordingly, the Congress passes to the order of the day."

This resolution was moved by Bebel whose attitude, as well as that of Kautsky, was of a conciliatory centrist nature. Although they condemned Bernsteinism, the recognised leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party fought it in an irresolute, lukewarm, "diplomatic" way, preferring "a bad peace" to "a good quarrel." This conciliatory attitude towards revisionism contributed to the subsequent victory of the opportunists who, in the course of time, won control of the whole Party.

PAGE 37.* Starover (A. N. Potresov) in an article entitled "What Has Happened?" (*Zarya*, No. 1, April 1901, p. 42) wrote: "There are in Russia so many disguised and so few open adherents of this doctrine [revisionism—*Ed.*] that it is as though Bernsteinism were a secret disease which one does not openly avow when one has it."

PAGE 39.* This refers to the "alliance" of the revolutionary Social-Democrats and the "legal Marxists" (Struve, Bulgakov, Tugan-Baranovsky, etc.). It was a temporary alliance with the object of fighting the Narodniki in the legal press. Lenin was the first to expose the bourgeois nature of the "legal Marxists," those temporary fellow-travellers of the revolutionary Social-Democrats. This he did in an article entitled "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism Of It in Mr. Struve's Book." (See *Selected Works*, Volume I.) The article was signed K. Tulin. It is this article that Lenin refers to in the footnote to the present passage inserted in the 1908 edition. Lenin placed the word "alliance" in quotation marks thus emphasising that it could be called an alliance only very conditionally.

PAGE 41.* The tsarist censorship placed no restrictions on the circulation of the writings of the revisionists. In 1901 as many as three translations were brought out, in St. Petersburg and Moscow, of the book in which Bernstein criticises the programme and tactical views of the revolutionary Social-Democrats. This tolerance was all the more significant in that at that time even the publications of the liberal bourgeoisie were persecuted by the government. Lenin establishes a direct connection between this tolerance and the "Zubatovist" policy of the government; he points out that Zubatov, the notorious police agent, recommended Bernstein's book to the workers as an "antidote" to the influence of the revolutionary Social-Democrats.

In referring to Bernstein as "celebrated in the Herostratus sense," Lenin alludes to the ancient Greek story of a certain Herostratus who, wishing to preserve his name in history, set fire to the famous Temple of Diana at Ephesus.

PAGE 42.* *Vademecum (Guide) for the Editors of "Rabocheye Dyelo"* was the title of a collection of documents relating to Economism, brought out by the Emancipation of Labour group in Geneva (1900). The collection included: *A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats* (see *Selected Works*, Volume I), Axelrod's answer to the pamphlet, *A Contribution to the Question of the Present Tasks and Tactics of the Russian Social-Democrats*, and an announcement of the resumption of publication by the Emancipation of Labour group. Besides this, two letters were reproduced which, though addressed to Axelrod personally, presented considerable public interest since they showed the full measure of the opportunism of the writers, M. M. (E. D. Kuskova, author of the *Credo*) and G. (the Bundist "Grishin"—Kopelson), and of "an Economist" (Prokopovich) mentioned by them who, according to the writers of the letter, "leaves positively no stone unturned" of the programme and tactical views of the Social-Democrats.

These documents were preceded by a long introduction by Plekha-

nov in which he explained the reason for the publication of the collection and criticised some of the assertions of the *Rabocheye Dyelo* group. The collection of documents exposed the falsity of Economism and its ideological identity with West European opportunism. Lenin endorsed the position adopted by Plekhanov in *Vademecum*.

PAGE 43.* *Two Congresses* was the title under which the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad issued its announcement of its Third Congress, which was held in October 1901. The object of this Congress was to unite all the organisations of Russian Social-Democrats abroad. The attempt failed. The Economists (*Rabocheye Dyelo*) refused to endorse the resolution passed at the preliminary conference in Geneva (June 1901) which explicitly condemned Economism, Bernsteinism, Millerandism and all other forms of opportunism. This led to the *Iskra* and *Sotsial-Demokrat* organisations withdrawing from the Congress.

The groups that withdrew made the proposal that a joint report of the Congress be issued. But the *Rabocheye Dyelo* group refused, and issued an independent *communiqué* which contained many misrepresentations of the debates at the Congress. The *Iskra* and *Sotsial-Demokrat* organisations (which now united to form the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats) also brought out a pamphlet entitled *Documents of the "Unity" Congress* (Geneva 1901) in which they exposed these misrepresentations. The preface to this pamphlet was written by Lenin. (See *Collected Works*, Vol. IV, Book II, p. 56.)

The *Rabocheye Dyelo* pamphlet, *Two Congresses*, is closely analysed in *What Is To Be Done?*

PAGE 46.* *The Announcement of the Resumption of Publication by the Emancipation of Labour Group*, besides being included in Plekhanov's *Vademecum* (see note to page 42*), appeared in pamphlet form (Geneva 1900). It pointed out that one of the effects of the tremendous practical work carried on during the preceding years by the Social-Democrats had been to relegate theoretical work to the background. This gap between theory and revolutionary practice had proved disastrous, for it had facilitated the rise of revisionist tendencies (Bernsteinism and Economism). Against the background of a growing working class movement the group was resuming its literary activity, with the slogan of a relentless, theoretical fight against all anti-revolutionary elements in the Social-Democratic movement.

Unlike the *Announcement*, the other document mentioned by Lenin paid no attention to the importance of theory and adapted the demands of the Party to the level of the most backward strata of the working class.

PAGE 47.* The Gotha Programme was adopted at the United Congress of

the Lassallean and Eisenach Parties in Gotha in May 1875. In order to effect a union with the opportunist Lassallean wing, the Eisenachers, who on the whole were the revolutionary Marxian wing of the Congress, compromised with them on a number of points, and this found expression in the programme. Marx and Engels disagreed with the Lassallean passages in the draft programme and severely criticised the programme. (*Critique of the Gotha Programme.*) The letters of Marx and Engels, which contained this criticism, were sent to Bracke and communicated by the latter to Wilhelm Liebknecht, but Liebknecht withheld them from the Congress.

In 1891 the German Social-Democratic Party at its Congress in Halle decided to revise the Gotha Programme. Engels at that time also published Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. In October of the same year, 1891, a congress of the German Social-Democratic Party which met in Erfurt adopted a new programme, known as the Erfurt Programme, which was also criticised by Engels on account of the opportunist passages contained in it.

PAGE 52.* In May 1896 about 3,500 St. Petersburg spinners and weavers went on strike. As a result of this strike the workers succeeded in obtaining certain concessions from their employers as well as from the government. On June 14 (2), 1897, a law was enacted limiting the working day for the whole of Russia to eleven and a half hours. In spite of the insignificance of these gains (the law limiting the working day, for example, was evaded by overtime work), they bred illusions concerning the possibility of obtaining real improvements by means of purely industrial action. These illusions prepared the ground for the influence of Economism among the workers.

PAGE 54.* The pamphlet *On Agitation* met with success because it came out at a moment when the moment was ripe to pass from propaganda in study circles, which could only train a small number of revolutionaries, to agitation among the working class masses.

But the pamphlet advanced the mistaken theory that the movement could not undertake political action before it had reached a definite stage of development. This "stages theory" was formulated in the pamphlet as follows: the proletariat will take the path of political action only when "the economic struggle will have made clear to it the impossibility of obtaining any improvement of its position in the existing political conditions." The Economists advanced this "stages theory" (first *only* economic action, and only after that to pass to political action) in order to justify their tactics.

Lenin points out that attention had already been drawn to this insufficiently clear formulation of the question at the time when the pamphlet was being circulated in manuscript. The pamphlet had been criticised by Axelrod who wrote a postscript to it, and it was submitted to a

special critical analysis by Plekhanov (in his article "Once Again Socialism and the Political Struggle").

PAGE 56.* *Listok Rabotnika* (*Workers' Sheet*) was published by the League of Russian Social-Democrats and edited by the Emancipation of Labour group (Plekhanov, Axelrod and Zasulich). When the League began to veer towards the opportunist attitude of the Economists, the Emancipation of Labour group refused to continue editing *Listok Rabotnika*. Relations were broken off. The League, however, was able to bring out one more issue of *Listok* (No. 9-10, 1898) which was edited in an Economist spirit. The issue was the last to appear under that name. After that the organ of the League was published under the new name of *Rabocheye Dyelo*.

Listok Rabotnika, in its last number, No. 9-10, contained the "rules for a workers' benefit fund" which Lenin mentions. The functions of such a fund were defined as follows: the fund assists strikers, obtains books for circulation, meets the expenses for renting a room for study circles, publishes a workers' paper, and assists those who have suffered for the cause of the workers. This is followed by instructions on how to organise funds at the factories (by groups of not more than five, who must elect a treasurer; the treasurers in every city must hold meetings at least three times a year).

PAGE 64.* The Hirsch-Duncker unions, the yellow trade unions of Germany, thus called after their two founders Hirsch and Duncker, were a bourgeois stronghold within the working class movement. Their object was to reduce the trade unions to the role of workers' benefit societies. A necessary condition of membership was the rejection of political action and of a number of other Social-Democratic demands. Non-workers were admitted as members. With the aid of these organisations the German bourgeoisie hoped to deflect the working class movement into the groove of bourgeois reformism. But they never succeeded in building up a mass organisation. The members of the Hirsch-Duncker unions never exceeded several tens of thousands, while that of the Social-Democratic unions ran into hundreds of thousands.

PAGE 65.* No. 1 of *Rabochaya Mysl* contained the "rules for a workers' benefit fund" that were afterwards reprinted in No. 9-10 of *Listok Rabotnika*. (See note to page 56.)* The paragraph Lenin has in view runs as follows: "The principal object of the fund is to help the workers unite in one common union to fight against the capitalist employers and the government that protects their interests."

PAGE 70.* In 1871, after the victorious war with France and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, the unity of Germany was brought about by the in-

clusion of the states of Southern Germany in the North German Union, which was formed in 1867 after the war with Austria. Germany was proclaimed an empire and the King of Prussia—German Emperor. The Reichstag became the parliament for the whole empire.

PAGE 80.* The reference is to the following passage in the resolution of the Fourth Congress of the Bund: "The economic struggle is a better method for drawing the masses into the movement; it should become the starting point for political agitation, which must go beyond the boundary of the economic struggle. But it is quite unnecessary, at the very beginning, to carry on political agitation exclusively on the basis of the economic struggle." A *communiqué* concerning the Congress appeared in pamphlet form under the title, *The Fourth Congress of the Jewish Labour League in Lithuania, Poland and Russia* (Geneva 1901), and it was also reprinted in No. 10 of *Rabocheye Dyelo*.

PAGE 95.* In his article "The Autocracy and the Proletariat," Lenin described the attitude of the liberal bourgeoisie to terrorism, and spoke of its sympathetic response to the terrorist attempts. "The wave of liberalism," he wrote, "rises and falls in close connection with the moods of the various Ministers, whose succession is accelerated by bombs. It is not surprising, therefore, that our radical (or would-be radical) members of the bourgeois opposition should so often show sympathy for terrorism. It is not surprising that it is the section of the revolutionary intelligentsia which has no faith in the vitality and strength of the proletariat and of the proletarian class struggle that is particularly drawn towards terror."

PAGE 95.** The Revolutionary Socialist group *Svoboda* (*Freedom*) was formed in May 1901, with L. Nadezhdin as its leader. Its programme was muddled and lacked consistency. While recognising the need for the political struggle of the working class, they advocated "excitative" terrorism, that is to say, a terrorism which would help to rouse the working masses to political action. Of the two tendencies in the St. Petersburg Social-Democratic organisation they supported the Economists. The distinctive feature of the group was that its programme was patched up out of detached propositions of the programmes of the Economists, of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and, to a certain extent, of the revolutionary Social-Democrats. Of course, no good could come of such a hodge-podge. The group broke up in 1903.

A little later Lenin wrote of the group: "For programme—double book-keeping; for tactics—double book-keeping; for practical work—demagogy; such is the portrait of the Revolutionary Socialist group *Svoboda*."

Of the publications of the group which Lenin mentions and criticises we may mention the review *Svoboda* and two pamphlets, *The Regeneration of Revolutionism in Russia* and *The Eve of the Revolution*.

PAGE 95.*** In this work Axelrod outlined two prospects.

First prospect: "The working class movement remains confined to a narrow groove of purely economic conflicts between the workers and their employers; as such, on the whole, it lacks a political character. In the fight for political liberty the advanced sections of the proletariat follow the lead of the bourgeois intelligentsia; they fight for freedom, but under a flag that is not their own."

Second prospect: "The Social-Democrats organise the Russian proletariat into an independent political party, which fights for freedom, *partly side by side and in alliance with* bourgeois revolutionary groups (if they exist), but partly drawing directly into their own ranks, or giving the lead to, those elements of the intelligentsia that are most devoted to the people and most revolutionary. It is clear that the latter prospect will demand a much higher level of political and class consciousness on the part of the workers than the former, for the former would allow the representatives of the bourgeoisie to be the leaders of the revolutionary movement and reduce the proletariat to the position of a mass led by them and blindly following them." (See note to page 3.*)

PAGE 111.* The articles from *Iskra* which Lenin refers to are the following:

"The Workers' Party and the Peasantry," by Lenin in *Iskra*, No. 3 (in this volume), on the necessity of introducing the class struggle in the rural districts.

"The Autocracy and the Zemstvo," in *Iskra*, No. 4, on the irreconcilability between the local government bodies and the autocracy. This article was written by Peter Struve before the Social-Democrats had finally broken with him. It dealt with the secret memorandum on the Zemstvo drawn up by the tsarist minister, Witte. Lenin deals with this memorandum in his article "The Persecutors of the Zemstvo and the Hannibals of Liberalism" (reprinted in part in the present volume; see also note to page 205*).

"The Serfowners at Work," by Lenin, in *Iskra*, No. 8 (*Collected Works*, Vol. IV, Book I, p. 176), against the feudal landownership of the nobility, was written on the occasion of the promulgation of the law of June 21 (8), 1901, authorising the transfer of state lands in Siberia to private persons. The law was a new gift granted by tsarism to the serfowning nobility.

"The Zemstvo Congress," an item written by Lenin in the same issue. It deals with the illegal Zemstvo Congress and calls on the Zemstvo people to begin a resolute fight against tsarism.

"Concerning Recent Events," by Vera Zasulich, *Iskra*, No. 3, in response to the student disturbances of February-March 1901.

When the government paper *Rossiia* (*Russia*) advised the young people (students) to get rid of the influence of the extremist parties, affirming that the government was prepared, without waiting for a struggle, to

advance along the road of reforms, *Iskra* (in No. 5) published an article by Potresov entitled "On Senseless Dreams." The same issue contains the item mentioned by Lenin, entitled "A Police Raid on Literature"; the writer is unknown.

No. 6 contains an appraisal of reforms from above, suggested by *Novoye Vremya* (*New Times*). The article is by Lenin. (See "A Valuable Admission," *Collected Works*, Vol. IV, Book I, p. 164.)

The item, "The Incident in the Ekaterinoslav Zemstvo" (No. 7, unsigned), encouraged the protest of the Zemstvo statisticians.

The item, "The Vyatka Scabs" (No. 9), condemned the statisticians of the Vyatka Zemstvo for not supporting their colleagues of Ekaterinoslav when they declared a boycott against Rodzyanko, the chairman of the Ekaterinoslav Zemstvo.

PAGE 113.* Professor Brentano, while recognising the existence of the class struggle, tried to interpret it in a way that would be favourable to the bourgeoisie. He maintained that there was no need for the working class to fight for its dictatorship, since even under capitalism it could obtain the satisfaction of its demands with the aid of the state (which according to Brentano is not the instrument of class domination and oppression). A policy of gradual reforms and economic collaboration of the classes—such was his theory; today the social-traitors have made it theirs. It is in this sense that Lenin speaks of the Brentano (*i.e.*, bourgeois) conception of the class struggle.

PAGE 119.* On the Self-Emancipation group see note to page 4.** The "Labour versus Capital" group existed for only about two months, after which it was suppressed by the *Okhrana* (Secret Police) before it had had time to do anything.

PAGE 120.* Plekhanov's *Vademecum* (see note to page 42*) called forth from *Rabocheye Dyelo* the publication of a special pamphlet (*Reply of the Editors of "Rabocheye Dyelo" to the "Letter" by P. Axelrod and "Vademecum" by G. Plekhanov*, Geneva 1900). It is to this reply that Lenin refers.

PAGE 122.* Narcissus is the name of a character in Greek mythology who was so proud of his beauty that he rejected the love of a goddess. To punish him the gods caused him to fall in love with his own reflection in the water; he looked at it continually and ended by committing suicide. Narcissus has become a by-word for self-infatuation and it is in this sense that Lenin uses the word.

PAGE 129.* A "loose organisation" (in German *lose Organisation*) was understood to mean an organisation to which access was relatively free and which, consequently, was more or less shapeless; such an organisa-

tion may for instance lack a definite programme and merely have a few rules regulating the admission of new members, etc.

PAGE 158.* The League of Russian Social-Democrats commissioned the editors of *Rabocheye Dyelo* to draw up a report on the state of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia for presentation to the Congress of the Second International. The report (to which was appended a memorandum of the Bund on the history of the Jewish working class movement) appeared in pamphlet form under the title, *Report on the Russian Social-Democratic Movement to the International Socialist Congress in Paris, 1900* (Geneva 1901).

PAGE 173.* *Rabochaya Gazeta* was founded by a group of Social-Democrats in Kiev. Two issues of it appeared in 1897. At the first Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., *Rabochaya Gazeta* was recognised as the central organ of the Party. The arrests that followed prevented the publication of issue No. 3 which was ready for the press.

In pointing out that the founders of *Iskra* began to publish the latter and did not continue the publication of *Rabochaya Gazeta* (although negotiations concerning the editing of the latter had been carried on between the Bund and Lenin, who had agreed to do this and had even written several leading articles), Lenin wanted to emphasise the fact that the editors of *Iskra* had no intention of dominating the Party, which the Economists accused them of wanting to do.

PAGE 193.* The Socialist-Revolutionary Party was formed in 1901 as a result of the amalgamation of a number of revolutionary Narodnik groups which were active in various parts of Russia and abroad. The official organ of the party "on questions of current affairs" was *Revolutsionnaya Rossyia*, edited by M. Gotz and V. Chernov, and its theoretical organ was *Vestnik Russkoy Revolyutsii* (*Messenger of the Russian Revolution*), edited by K. Tarasov and N. Russanov. The theoretical views of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party comprised a combination of the views of the old Narodniki and the revisionist distortions of Marxism. Being unable to oppose Marxism by any sort of complete theoretical doctrine, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, like the revisionists in Western Europe, tried to "revise" the fundamental points of the Marxian theory.

In place of the Marxian theory of the class struggle, the Socialist-Revolutionaries advanced their own theory, viz., the struggle of all the exploited, i.e., the workers, peasants and the working intelligentsia, against the exploiters, i.e., the capitalists and landlords. This theory obviously obscures the distinction between the proletariat and the petty-bourgeois peasants and denies the class struggle in the rural districts.

A characteristic feature of the Socialist-Revolutionary programme was the demand for the socialisation of the land, "the organisation of equal land tenure for the peasants on the basis of enlarged social ownership

of land." This, in the opinion of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, would lead to the victory of socialism; and the best way to secure victory over capitalism, in their opinion, was to organise "socialised" agricultural co-operative societies under the capitalist system.

By glossing over the process of capitalist development in the rural districts and ignoring the class differentiation that was taking place among the peasantry, the Socialist-Revolutionaries sowed the illusion that the impending revolution, the bourgeois-democratic character of which they failed to understand, would result in the emancipation of the peasantry from all the exploitation to which they were subjected, including the exploitation of capitalism.

In regard to tactics, the Socialist-Revolutionaries attached supreme importance to individual terrorism. This blinded them to all other forms of revolutionary struggle and absorbed most of their efforts and attention in the course of their practical work.

In its ideology, tactics and membership, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party was a typical party of petty-bourgeois democrats, which was all the more harmful because its petty-bourgeois character was concealed by the flag of socialism and because in its work it opposed the efforts of the Social-Democrats to organise the workers in an independent political workers' party.

The article—really an outline—"Why the Social-Democrats Must Declare Determined and Relentless War On the Socialist-Revolutionaries," and the one following it, "Vulgar Socialism and Narodism Revived by the Socialist-Revolutionaries," are the first articles Lenin wrote in opposition to the Socialist-Revolutionaries. He attached enormous importance to the struggle against the Socialist-Revolutionary Party because of the "Leftism" it displayed in words and the opportunism it displayed in its actions. Subsequently, in 1920, in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, in reviewing the struggle which the Bolsheviks waged against the enemies in the labour movement, a struggle which helped Bolshevism to grow and become hardened, Lenin emphasises the importance of the fact that the traditions of the ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchist revolutionaries go back to the period of 1900-03, to the time when the foundations of the mass party, of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, were laid. "Bolshevism," he said, "adopted and continued the struggle against the party which, more than any other, expressed the tendencies of petty-bourgeois revolutionariness, namely, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party."

PAGE 205.* The secret memorandum *The Autocracy and the Zemstvo*, by S. Y. Witte, the Minister of Finance, was published abroad (in Germany) in 1901. In this memorandum addressed to the tsar, Witte dwelt in detail on the history and the role of the Zemstvo. He argued that the latter was "not compatible with an autocratic system of government,"

that it was by nature a fundamental appurtenance of a constitutional political order and that the further development of Zemstvo local government would only reinforce the desire of "society" for a constitutional transformation of the autocracy. Witte advised against any further extension of Zemstvo institutions and was in favour of strengthening and improving the government's bureaucratic machine in the provinces, since in his opinion the existing machine was not sufficiently powerful, reliable or active. The memorandum, which forms a book of 212 pages, was published abroad with an extensive preface by R. N. S. (P. B. Struve). The preface, written from a liberal standpoint, showed that Struve had completely broken with Marxism and had finally become a liberal who unconditionally rejected the *revolutionary struggle* against tsarism. In the article entitled "The Persecutors of the Zemstvo and the Hannibals of Liberalism" (first appeared in *Zarya*, No. 2-3, 1901), Lenin analysed Witte's memorandum and Struve's preface to it. The article contained six chapters. In the first four Lenin analyses the memorandum and dwells in detail on the real nature of the Zemstvo. He points out that the Zemstvo reform was the concession which Alexander II's government was forced to make under the pressure of "the public unrest and the revolutionary offensive" of the 'sixties. But on the other hand the concession was contrived in such a way that it did nothing to limit the omnipotence and irresponsibility of the tsarist bureaucracy. Having bribed and pacified the majority of the moderate liberals by means of insignificant reforms, the government came down with all the more ruthless cruelty on those revolutionary-democratic elements which were not to be satisfied by miserable reforms, and were not only capable of talking of freedom but were capable of fighting for it. Subsequently the government proceeded gradually to take back, one after another, the concessions it had made. The Zemstvo liberals repeatedly tried to protest against the reactionary policy of tsarism, but as they dreaded revolution and drastic methods of struggle above all things they hoped to obtain this end by none but "peaceful means," thus revealing their utter political impotence. Instead of supporting the revolutionary wing of the opposition they only complained and moaned when the government began to increase police oppression and reaction. Like the other reforms of the 'sixties, the Zemstvo reform, far from being incompatible with the autocratic order, actually strengthened the latter by splitting the opposition and facilitating an *entente* between tsarism and a section of the liberals who were on the whole satisfied with the reform.

The last two chapters of Lenin's article are devoted to the analysis of the preface by R. N. S. (Struve) and to an appraisal, in the person of the latter, of the bourgeois liberalism of the time. Owing to lack of space only these two chapters are reproduced in the present volume, as presenting the greatest interest.

As soon as it was written, in 1901, Lenin's article became the occasion

for dissensions among the editors of *Zarya*; Plekhanov, for example, strongly disapproved of the tone of the article. He wrote to Lenin: "We must not abuse the *liberals as such*. This would be tactless; *we must appeal from the bad liberal to the good liberal*. . . . Our attitude to the liberals must be as to eventual allies, but your tone, it must be confessed, is far from that of an ally. . . . You talk like an enemy, when we ought to be talking like allies. . . . At the present moment *we must not stroke the liberals the wrong way, that would be a great mistake*."

PAGE 206.* As soon as it became evident that the revolutionary outbreaks of the peasants (in the 'sixties) had subsided, the government began taking back, step by step, the concessions it had made at the time of the so-called "great reforms," *i.e.*, the emancipation of the serfs. This began under Alexander II, but after the accession of Alexander III (1881) the reaction was further aggravated. Zemsky Nachalniki were introduced in the rural districts and the peasants were placed under their unlimited authority; corporal punishment was partly restored for the peasants; the rights of the Zemstvo were greatly curtailed; municipal self-government, which had always been of the most wretched description, was reduced to practically nothing; the courts were reorganised in such a way as to increase bureaucratic irresponsibility.

It is this policy that Lenin describes as the "wicked revision" of the reforms of Alexander II under Alexander III.

PAGE 208.* On March 13 (1), 1881, Alexander II was assassinated by the members of *Narodnaya Volya*. A few days later, on March 22 (10), 1881, the Executive Committee of *Narodnaya Volya* addressed an open letter to Alexander III offering him terms the acceptance of which was "necessary if peaceful work is to take the place of the revolutionary movement." The terms were: a general amnesty to all political offenders; the convening of an assembly of representatives of the people without distinction of class or "estate"; freedom of the press, of speech, of meetings, etc. On these terms the Executive Committee undertook to discontinue its activities and to divert the forces it had organised for revolutionary action to peaceful work.

PAGE 216.* On the withdrawal of the liberal nobility and bourgeoisie from the opposition in the 'sixties, see note to page 205.*

The revolutionary movement began to gather force in the 'seventies, this time mainly among the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia of the towns and the factory workers. This found expression in a considerable growth of the revolutionary organisations and in their increased activity (for example, *Narodnaya Volya*). There were also signs of growing discontent among the liberal sections of the nobility and bourgeoisie. Some of the Zemstvo liberals displayed constitutional tendencies, and attempts were

even made to form illegal unions and start an underground press. But these attempts only revealed the complete political impotence of the Zemstvo liberals. They were by no means disinclined to make use of the revolutionary movement when it could be used to frighten the autocracy. But as soon as the government made a few concessions to the liberals by replacing the more reactionary Ministers and making vague and noncommittal promises, the attitude of the liberals towards the "destructive activity of the extreme revolutionary party" became exceedingly hostile. By means of this policy of promises and deceit the government was able again to draw the moderate liberals to its side. After the assassination of Alexander II at the hands of *Narodnaya Volya*, the liberals definitely adopted the policy of coming to an agreement with the government. Alexander III's government "did not show its claws at once, but thought it expedient for a time to try to fool 'society'" (Lenin). By means of demagogic promises which it never intended to keep, it fostered the hope among the liberals of obtaining the desired reforms by peaceful means. Only when it became evident that a mass revolutionary outbreak in the near future was impossible did the government launch an undisguised counter-offensive. (See note to page 206.*)

PAGE 217.* Lenin refers to the views of *Rabochaya Mysl* on the objects of political action. While not denying the necessity for political action on the part of the proletariat, *Rabochaya Mysl* used the term, not to denote revolutionary struggle leading to the overthrow of tsarism, but a struggle for gradual reforms under tsarism. In this way *Rabochaya Mysl* reduced Social-Democratic tactics to the level of the political prejudices of the backward workers who hoped to obtain some improvement of their position *without abolishing the autocracy*. (See notes to pages 4* and 25.*)

PAGE 222.* The reference is to a passage in *The Class Struggles In France, 1848-50*, by Marx. Speaking of the defeats suffered by the revolution, Marx says: "But what succumbed in these defeats was not the revolution. It was the pre-revolutionary traditional appendages . . . persons, illusions, conceptions, projects, from which the revolutionary party before the February Revolution [*i.e.*, the French revolution of February 1848—*Ed.*] was not free, from which it could be freed, not by the victory of February, but only by a series of defeats." (P. 33.) Marx emphasises that the significance of that revolution did not lie in the immediate and insignificant gains it could have achieved, but in the fact that by shattering the illusions and prejudices that prevailed before the revolution it helped to forge a genuinely revolutionary party.

PAGE 224.* As soon as the tactical and organisational achievements of *Iskra* became evident, the editors set to work to draw up a programme. In

the discussion of this question serious dissensions arose among the editors. Two drafts were submitted, one by Plekhanov and one by Lenin. Lenin reproached Plekhanov for having drawn up a "syllabus for students" instead of the programme of a fighting party that had declared war on Russian capitalism. Besides accusing Plekhanov of talking of capitalism in the abstract, and not of Russian capitalism, Lenin pointed out a number of other grave mistakes committed by Plekhanov. In particular, Lenin pointed out that Plekhanov had incorrectly presented the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry in the advance towards the socialist revolution, that he had failed to bring out the role of the proletariat as the only class that is consistently revolutionary to the end, and that he had not "singled out" the proletariat from the whole mass of the working and exploited classes. Lenin also insisted on inserting a paragraph on the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was deleted by Plekhanov in his second draft. In *Iskra*, Lenin's draft programme was accompanied by the following editorial note: "The theoretical part of this draft is a draft proposed by one of the editors, Frey [*i.e.*, Lenin—*Ed.*] (and is drawn up on the basis of the original draft by G. V. Plekhanov). The practical part (from the point indicated below to the end) is proposed by the whole committee, *i.e.*, by the five editors."

Clause C had also been adopted by the whole committee.

The dispute between Lenin and Plekhanov soon passed from general questions of the programme to questions connected with the agrarian programme. (See "The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy" in this volume and also note to page 318.*)

PAGE 234.* "The Workers' Party and the Peasantry" was written in 1901, *i.e.*, shortly before the revival of the peasant movement which rose to an unprecedented height in 1902, especially in the South of Russia. The extent of the rise of the peasant movement of that year can be judged from the following figures: the number of peasant outbreaks was 48 in 1900, 50 in 1901 and 340 in 1902. The wave of peasant outbreaks swept over a number of districts, but it was particularly high in the South (Kharkov and Poltava Gubernias) and in the Saratov Gubernia. Besides such general factors as the prevalence of feudal exploitation (*otraboiki*), the growth of capitalist exploitation, the aggravation of the class struggle in the countryside, the influence of the working class movement in the towns, etc., there were also special causes for this, including a bad harvest, which made the position of the peasants, bad as it was, still worse. These peasant outbreaks revealed the presence of considerable revolutionary excitement among the peasants. They showed that the country was on the verge of revolution, that the central issue of the latter would be the land question, and that the peasants would take part in this revolution as a revolutionary force. The party of the proletariat was con-

fronted with the problem of determining its attitude to the agrarian and peasant question and with the problem of the relation of the proletariat to the peasantry and to the various strata of the latter.

"The Workers' Party and the Peasantry" by Lenin was the first article to appear in *Iskra* where the main problems of the agrarian programme and of the tactics of the proletarian party in respect of the peasants were set out with exhaustive clarity. That the article was actually intended as the outline of a programme is confirmed by the following words of Lenin: "In one of its first issues (March 1901, No. 3) *Iskra* gave the outline of an agrarian programme: in an article, "The Workers' Party and the Peasantry," it defined its view of the basic principles of a Russian Social-Democratic agrarian policy. The article may be regarded as the first draft of the agrarian programme of the R.S.D.L.P. which the editors of *Iskra* and *Zarya* brought out in the summer of 1902 and which became the official programme of our Party at the Second Party Congress (August 1903)." (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. IX.)

Lenin's attitude towards the agrarian and peasant question is formulated in many of his writings. The following idea is the foundation of all Lenin's writings on questions of agrarian policy and of the agrarian programme: "We recognise the class struggle as the central fact in the domain of agrarian relations in Russia. We base the whole of our agrarian policy (and, consequently, our agrarian programme) on an unswerving recognition of this fact along with all the consequences resulting from it. But the principal immediate object is to clear the road for the free development of the class struggle in the countryside, of the class struggle of the proletariat, directed towards the achievement of the final aim of international Social-Democracy, the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the laying of the foundations of a socialist society." (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. V.)

Lenin's Marxian approach to the study of rural Russia enabled him to establish the presence of two types of class contradictions: on the one hand, the contradiction arising from the capitalist development of the rural districts, i.e., the contradiction between the agricultural labourers and the *entrepreneurs*; on the other hand, the contradiction between the peasantry as a whole and the landlord class. The immediate task, according to Lenin, was the struggle against the survivals of serfdom, and in this struggle the peasantry should take part as a whole, as a class.

Lenin considered *the abolition of feudal relations in the rural districts to be part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, i.e., the abolition of the autocracy, the abolition of the domination of the class of big landlords.* The social-economic nature of this revolution would be bourgeois-democratic, for it would not abolish capitalism and capitalist exploitation, but would abolish only that which hindered the development of capitalism, that which hindered the development of the class struggle of the proletariat.

PAGE 235.* The reference is to the defeat of Russia in the Crimean War of 1853-56. This war was the outcome of the efforts of Nicholas I's government, acting in the interests of the landlords and the bourgeoisie (mainly commercial), to seize the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles with a view to safeguarding Russia's foreign trade and, primarily, her grain exports. With this object, the Russian army and navy attacked Turkey in 1853. But a victory of tsarist Russia was not in the interests of the bourgeoisie of England, France and Austria, so tsarism found itself at war with other countries besides Turkey. The English and the French landed an army in the Crimea and after a siege of eleven months took the Russian key fortress of Sevastopol. The Russian Black Sea Fleet was sunk. By the Peace of Paris (1856) Russia lost the right to keep a fleet in the Black Sea. In 1871 tsarist diplomacy obtained the withdrawal of this prohibition.

PAGE 235.** The indignation of the peasants on the eve of the Reform of 1861, *i.e.*, the emancipation of the serfs, grew rapidly. If we trace the growth of peasant disturbances by decades we see that the number of such disturbances in 1826-34 was 148, in 1835-44—216, in 1845-54—348. Between 1835 and 1855, 144 landlords were killed. The number of disturbances in the five years preceding the Reform, *i.e.*, from 1855 to March 3 (February 19), 1861, was 474.

These figures show that it was on the very eve of the Manifesto of 1861, which proclaimed the so-called emancipation of the serfs, that the peasant movement assumed particularly large dimensions. At times the disturbances assumed a very serious character and had to be suppressed with the aid of troops. The following passage from a report of the Chief of the Corps of Gendarmes, in 1858, is significant in this respect: "The disorders that are of most frequent occurrence at present consist of the serfs either evading the payment of quit rent and other dues or showing disobedience towards the headsmen or towards the owners themselves. Disturbances of entire villages demanding the personal intervention of the highest provincial authorities or the aid of military detachments have occurred in cases where the landlords do not comply in their orders with the present spirit of the times, or where there have been instigators. Events of this kind, more or less important, have taken place in the course of the year in twenty-five provinces." The countryside was literally seething and *this* was what forced the government to *make haste* with the Reform.

PAGE 235.*** The statutory charter was a document defining the mutual relations between the landlords and the peasants. The *landlord* had to draw it up in the course of a year from the date of the Act of March 3 (February 19), 1861. If the landlord failed to do so within this time it was drawn up by the Arbitrator, *i.e.*, an official appointed to super-

vise the carrying out of the "emancipation." He was usually a member of the local nobility. The statutory charter had to indicate the amount of land held by the peasants, the changes that would be made in the peasants' landholdings, the payments, dues, etc. In reality, the statutory charters were documents giving legal form to the spoliation of the peasants, and it is, therefore, not strange that the first four months after the Manifesto saw 647 peasant disturbances, *i.e.*, more than during the whole of the preceding decade; or that in the course of the two years during which the Reform was being carried out (1861-63), troops had to be called out in 2,115 villages to force the peasants to sign the charters. In Bezdna, in the Kazan Gubernia, a pitched battle took place, in the course of which 51 were killed and 40 severely wounded. Anton Petrov, the peasant leader, was sentenced to be shot. It was said at the time: "There were never so many floggings as after 'freedom' was proclaimed."

PAGE 235.*** The Manifesto of March 3 (February 19), 1861, which proclaimed the so-called emancipation of the serfs, was written by Philaret, Metropolitan (Archbishop—*Ed. Eng. ed.*) of Moscow. The wording was exceptionally hypocritical; it wound up with an invitation to the peasants to ask the "blessing of God" for their "free labour." Only an extreme hypocrite (a Jesuit, as Lenin puts it) could talk of the "free labour" of the peasants who had been robbed by this "emancipation" and thus delivered into a new form of bondage to the landlords.

PAGE 236.* In addition to the annuities, the peasants had to pay for the land they received at the time of the "emancipation"; numerous taxes were heaped upon them, such as: Zemstvo rates, the poll tax, insurance, taxes-in-kind, etc., etc. The result was that the burden of payments that lay on a peasant's holding, expressed in percentage of the money income, amounted in the Tver Gubernia to 252 per cent, in Smolensk to 220, in Kostroma to 240, in Pskov to 213, in Vladimir to 276, and in Vyatka to 200 per cent (the figures refer to the 'eighties). It is easy to see why a peasant with a "beggar's holding" which committed him to onerous payments found it more advantageous to run away from his holding and even to pay to get rid of it.

While thus squeezing the very life-blood out of the peasants, the government showed great care and attention in protecting the interests of the landlords. Thus, for instance, in the Yegorevsk Uyezd, the taxes paid by a landlord of the nobility owning 253 dessiatins were equal to those of a peasant with a holding of 9.4 dessiatins.

PAGE 243.* The pamphlet *To the Rural Poor* was written and published abroad in 1903. The pamphlet sets out, in a particularly clear and popular form, the basic ideas that became the foundation of the agrarian

programme afterwards adopted by the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. In a letter to Plekhanov (March 28 [15], 1903) Lenin wrote as follows on the plan of his work: "I have started to write a popular pamphlet for the peasants dealing with our agrarian problem. I am very anxious to explain our conception of the class struggle in the countryside on the *concrete* material available concerning the four strata of the rural population (the landlords, the peasant bourgeoisie, the middle peasants and the semi-proletarians together with the proletarians)."

On April 27 (14), 1903, Martov wrote to Axelrod: "Vladimir Ilyich has written what we believe to be an excellent little book, *To the Rural Poor*, with the object of popularising our programme among the peasants. It may create as great an impression as *What Is To Be Done?*" (*Letters of P. B. Axelrod and J. O. Martov*, Berlin, 1904.) And indeed, the revolutionary significance of this work of Lenin's was very great, for it gave not only an exhaustive analysis of the class struggle in the countryside but also of the Party's tactics as regards the peasantry as a whole and of its various strata.

PAGE 248.* The State Council was an advisory body consisting of higher officials appointed by the tsar. Under the influence of the Revolution of 1905, after the State Duma or parliament had been established, the State Council was transformed into an Upper Chamber, the function of which was to consider and to sanction laws that had already been passed by the Duma. The new State Council consisted of 100 members appointed by the tsar and 100 elected by various groups of the ruling classes: by assemblies of the landowners, provincial assemblies of the Zemstvo, by the nobility, the clergy of the Orthodox Church, the big bourgeoisie and higher bourgeois intelligentsia. The president and vice-president were appointed by the tsar. Thus composed, the Council of State could be relied upon to kill even the most moderate decisions of the Duma if for some reason or other the ruling tsarist clique did not like them.

PAGE 248.** Lenin attached great value to the political liberties enjoyed in European countries from the standpoint of the struggle of the proletariat. In comparing the parliamentary system with the tsarist regime in Russia he always emphasised the complete lack of rights, the absence of even a shadow of political liberty and the lack of opportunity properly to organise the workers for the struggle against the bourgeoisie that prevailed in tsarist Russia. Compared with *such* a regime, he repeatedly emphasised, bourgeois democracy, the parliamentary system, was a much higher system and held out very many advantages for the future struggle. That is why he regarded the tsarist autocracy as ~~the~~ principal enemy in that period, when the bourgeois-democratic revolution was maturing. But at the same time Lenin warned the workers and

peasants that "political liberty will not deliver the working people from poverty . . . but it will give the workers a weapon with which to fight poverty," *i.e.*, fight for the socialist revolution. Of course Lenin understood perfectly well the class character of even the "freest [bourgeois] country." "The most democratic bourgeois republic," says Lenin, "is nothing more nor less than a machine with which the bourgeoisie oppresses the working class, with which a handful of capitalists oppresses the masses of the toilers."

PAGE 263.* The Peasants' Land Bank was founded in 1882. Its original purpose was to accelerate, in the interests of the impoverished landlords, the payment by the peasants of the compensation sums for the land assigned to the latter at the time of the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and, in general, to help the landlords to sell land for which they had no further use to the peasants at a high price. With this object, the bank was entitled to extend credits to the peasants. The real object of the bank, which was to give financial aid to the landowners at the expense of the peasants, was disguised in the original plan drawn up by the Minister of Finance Bunge by philanthropic phrases about assisting peasants with *insufficient* holdings to purchase land through the bank. But even these hypocritical philanthropic phrases appeared dangerous to the ruling class. In the course of the discussion of the draft in the State Council it was explicitly pointed out that a promise (the mere promise) of assistance might raise "unfounded hopes" among the poorer peasants and might be interpreted as a step towards the transfer of the land from the landlords to the peasants. As a result, the Articles of Association of the Peasants' Bank stated that the object of the bank was not to give assistance to the landless peasants, but "to provide facilities for peasants of every description to purchase land in such cases where the owners of the latter desire to sell and the peasants desire to buy such land."

In reality, the Peasants' Bank became a mere instrument of the landlord policy of tsarism. The price of land when purchased through the bank was considerably higher than when bought directly from the owners; thus, in 1883, the average price of land bought through the bank was 52 rubles, the price of land bought by private contract was 27 to 28 rubles; in 1895, the prices were 52 rubles and 42 rubles, respectively.

When agriculture was undergoing a crisis and the price of land was falling, thus affecting the interests of the landlords, the Peasants' Bank hastened to their rescue by buying great tracts of land at a higher price to re-sell to the peasants at a correspondingly high price, sometimes attracting the latter by deferred payments. When the serfs were emancipated in 1861 the landlords cut off the best parts of the peasants' holdings and kept them for themselves. Very often these "cut-off" lands, or *otrezki* as they were called, cut across the peasants' holdings and thus interfered with the proper working of the holding, for

the peasants were heavily fined if they trespassed on the landlords' land. Hedged in on all sides by these *otrezki* the peasants were anxious to buy them out at any price; this only resulted in a new kind of bondage, for it made them the debt-slaves of the bank.

The interest on the advances made by the bank to the peasants was higher than in other banks; thus, in 1894, the rate of interest on advances was 4.5 per cent in the Nobles' Bank and 6.5 per cent in the Peasants' Bank. The well-to-do peasants were placed in better conditions than the poor peasants. In 1883, money was advanced to prospective buyers up to the amount of nine-tenths of the price of the land purchased and so the peasant had to pay a deposit of only one-tenth of the total price; but by 1895 the deposit had been raised to one-third of the total price. Only the more well-to-do peasants could have such an amount of money at their disposal. All this—high prices and a high rate of interest—combined to pauperise the peasants still further. The arrears grew; the land was put up for sale to pay the arrears. It was again the poorer peasants who suffered most. Thus the proportion of land purchased through the bank that was forfeited for non-payment was 12.9 per cent in the case of land bought by rural communes, but only 1.4 per cent in the case of land bought by individual households, *i.e.*, by the rural bourgeoisie. In most cases the land that was thus put up for sale was bought by the local rich peasants.

The role of the Peasants' Bank became particularly great after the Revolution of 1905-07, when the government adopted a policy of creating "strong," *i.e.*, kulak, bourgeois holdings in the villages. (See article "The Agrarian [General] Policy of the Present Government," *Selected Works*, Vol. IV.)

PAGE 288.* Work "for the honour of it" is work without payment, for a drink. Engelhardt, the landlord who described his observations of rural life in a book entitled *From the Country*, lays bare the class nature of work "for the honour of it." He points out that the essential thing was not the drinks, "because even women who drink no vodka come; occasionally they even come without being called, simply on hearing that work is to be obtained. Of course, all this is due to the peasant still being dependent on the local landlord; the peasant needs firewood, he needs the meadow and the pasture, some day he may need money to borrow, and so on." (*From the Country*, 1897, p. 117.) And Engelhardt goes on to say that his own vegetable garden is always harvested in this way, "for the honour of it."

It was the same in the village. The peasants worked for a rich neighbour "for the honour of it," because here too the rural poor were dependent on the kulak.

PAGE 291.* The events of 1902-03 showed that the country was approach-

ing a revolution. The economic crisis which affected all the basic industries made the position of the working class, bad as it was, still worse: mass dismissals of workers, wage cuts, lower rates for piecework, etc. The reply to this was a great rise in the strike movement; some of these strikes in the South developed into general strikes. A wave of peasant revolutionary outbreaks, for the most part directed against the landlords, swept the country—especially in the South of Russia and in the Saratov Gubernia. In 1902 alone there were over 340 revolutionary peasant outbreaks. At the same time the student movement, as well as the opposition movement of the liberal bourgeoisie, was on the ascendant. It was in this heated atmosphere that the tsar's Manifesto of March 11 (February 26), 1903, which is mentioned by Lenin, appeared.

After expressing the tsar's grief at the "turmoil that is partly being created by intentions hostile to the political order and is partly due to an infatuation for principles alien to Russian life," the Manifesto went on to make some perfectly vague and non-committal promises to revise the "laws concerning the peasants," promised somewhat more definitely to improve the position of the rural clergy, and called on the "loyal sons of the fatherland" to unite on a basis of "faith, law and authority."

PAGE 300.* This passage is sufficient proof that in advancing the demand for the restitution of the *otrezki* (see note to page 311**) Lenin was far from regarding this as the last step. (See note to page 318.*)

PAGE 311.* "The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy" appeared in 1902 in *Zarya*. It was intended as a commentary on the agrarian section of the programme which had been written mainly by Lenin and was afterwards adopted by the Second Congress of the Party. (See note to page 341.**) The ideas Lenin elaborated in the ten chapters of the article are as follows:

1) The Russian Social-Democratic Party must have an agrarian programme. "By an agrarian programme we mean the definition of the leading principles of Social-Democratic policy on the agrarian question, i.e., in reference to agriculture and to the various classes, strata and groups of the rural population. In a 'peasant' country like Russia the socialist agrarian programme will naturally be mainly, if not entirely, a 'peasant programme,' a programme defining the attitude of the proletariat to the peasant question."

2) "The big landlords, the agricultural wage labourers and the 'peasants'—these are the three main components of the rural population of every capitalist country, including Russia." (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. V.)

While supporting the peasants in their struggle against the big landlords, the Party must "maintain an unswerving class standpoint, and,

far from surrendering anything of the proletarian standpoint to the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, it must demand that the small peasant, who is ruined and ground down by the whole structure of capitalism, give up *his own* class standpoint and adopt that of the proletariat." (*Ibid.*) This adoption by the small peasant of the proletarian standpoint will be facilitated to the extent that the conditions "for the free development of the class struggle" are most fully realised. This demands the abolition of all survivals of serfdom in the countryside. "The peasant demands that are incorporated in the programme of the proletarian party must be subordinated" to these two conditions.

3) The agrarian programme which sets itself the object of bringing about conditions for the *free development of the class struggle* of the proletariat in the rural districts for socialism, against the bourgeoisie, will enable it to draw a line dividing it "not only from *its enemies* (*i.e.*, the direct and indirect, conscious and unconscious adherents of the bourgeoisie, who for a time and to a limited extent may be our allies in the fight against the survivals of serfdom), but from those *unreliable friends* whose vague formulation of the agrarian questions can and does cause much harm to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat." (*Ibid.*)

4) Lenin draws a fundamental distinction between the section of the programme dealing with the working class and that dealing with the peasants: "In both sections we set forth not our final objects, but only our immediate demands. In both sections we keep within the confines of present-day (*i.e.*, bourgeois) society. This constitutes the similarity between the two sections. But the radical difference between them is that the demands contained in the working class section are directed against the *bourgeoisie*, while those contained in the peasant section are directed against the *feudal landlords*. In the former section we have to confine ourselves to *partial* improvements of the existing bourgeois order. In the latter we must aim at the *complete* cleansing of the present order of all survivals of serfdom. . . . In the working class section our immediate demands cannot be revolutionary in the social sense, since the social revolution that will overthrow the domination of the bourgeoisie will be a revolution of the proletariat that will achieve our *final* aim. In the peasant section we do include demands that are revolutionary in the social sense, since the social revolution that will overthrow the domination of the feudal landlords (*i.e.*, the social revolution of the bourgeoisie of the type of the Great French Revolution) is possible within the limits of the existing, bourgeois order." (*Ibid.*)

Owing to lack of space only one chapter of this article, chapter VII, is reproduced here. The subjects of the other chapters are to a large extent covered by two articles included in the present volume, *viz.*, "The Workers' Party and the Peasantry" and "To the Rural Poor." Chapter VII is of special interest because it contains an analysis of the objec-

tions of the Economists (Martynov, etc.) and the Socialist-Revolutionaries to Lenin's views on the agrarian and peasant question; it is also interesting on account of the dissensions it raised among the editors of *Iskra* on the question of land nationalisation. (See notes to pages 318* and 319.*) Even before the discussion of the present article, considerable friction had arisen between the editors, *viz.*, between Lenin and Plekhanov, on a number of fundamental points, which were brought out in the course of the discussion of the programme. (See note to page 224.*)

The situation in the editorial board became particularly acute in the course of the discussion of the present article. Plekhanov formulated his dissensions in so rude and tactless a form that Lenin believed a breach of business and personal relations to be inevitable. But in a letter dated July 3 (June 20), 1902, Plekhanov begged Lenin "not to be angry" with him and said that he "greatly respects" Lenin, that the two were seventy-five per cent "nearer to each other than to any other member of the editorial board; we do differ about the remaining twenty-five per cent but seventy-five is more than twenty-five; so for the sake of what unites us we must forget about our *differences*."

Lenin on his part slightly revised his article and left out the passage on nationalisation, which had raised particularly violent opposition. The result was that the article, as it appeared in *Zarya*, No. 4, differed from the original manuscript. The chapter as it appears here is reproduced from *Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. V, where it is reprinted in full from the manuscript.

PAGE 311.** This refers to the demand for the return to the peasants of the *otrezki* that was contained in the agrarian section of the programme adopted by the Second Congress of the R. S. D. L. P. This section, which in the main was written by Lenin, as finally drafted, read as follows:

"With the object of removing the survivals of serfdom, the burden of which lies heavily on the peasants, and in the interests of the free development of the class struggle in the countryside, the Party demands first and foremost:

"(1) The abolition of land compensation payments and quit rent as well as of all payments to which peasants are liable as belonging to the tax-paying 'estate.'

"(2) The repeal of all laws restricting the rights of the peasant to dispose of his land.

"(3) The restitution to the peasants of all sums levied upon them in the form of land compensation payments and quit rent; the confiscation, to this end, of the property of the monasteries and churches as well as of the land of the Appanages,¹ of the tsar's Cabinet² and of the

¹ Lands belonging to the tsar's family as a whole.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

² Lands belonging to the reigning tsar personally.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

members of the tsar's family; likewise the imposition of a special tax on the land of landowners belonging to the nobility who have profited by advances against land compensation payments; the sums thus obtained shall form a special people's fund for the cultural and charitable needs of the rural communities.

"4) The institution of peasant committees: a) for the purpose of restoring to the rural communities (by means of expropriation, or, in cases where the land has changed hands, by the state buying them out at the expense of the big landowners of the nobility) of lands which were cut off from the peasants' holdings at the time of the abolition of serfdom and which serve in the hands of the landlords as a means of keeping the peasants in bondage; b) in the Caucasus for the purpose of transferring to the possession of the peasants the lands they occupy as 'temporarily bonded' peasants, *Khizans*, etc.; c) for the purpose of abolishing the remnants of feudal relations that have survived in the Urals, in the Altai, in the West and in other parts of the country.

"5) The courts shall be entitled to reduce unduly high land rents and to annul transactions of a bondage character."

The documents connected with the drafting of this programme published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute show that Lenin objected very strongly to any *compensation* being paid for the *otrezki*. These documents contain the following amendments that he proposed to the agrarian section of the programme: "I suggest that the fourth point of our agrarian programme be amended as follows: in place of the words: 'The institution of peasant committees: a) for the restitution to the rural communities (by means of expropriation, or, in cases where the land has changed hands, by the state buying them out, etc.) of lands which . . . etc.,' to substitute words: 'The institution of peasant committees: a) for the restitution to the rural communities (by means of expropriation) of lands which . . . etc.,' i.e., to delete the italicised passage."

And Lenin goes on to give reasons for his suggestion: "1) Our agrarian programme contains our 'maximum,' our 'social-revolutionary demands' (see my commentary¹). To admit compensation would be in contradiction to the social-revolutionary character of the demand. 2) Both the history of 'compensation' (compensation of 1861) and its content (*cf.* the famous 'compensation' is nothing else than purchase²) have the specific taste of a vulgarly goody-goody and bourgeois measure. By seizing upon the fact that we have *admitted* compensation, it is quite possible for opponents to spoil the very essence of our demand (and there will be more than enough who will be ready to spoil it)." Here Lenin

¹ Lenin refers to the present article "The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy." (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. V.)—*Ed.*

² Words of N. G. Chernyshevsky on the Reform of 1861.—*Ed.*

puts a footnote: "By admitting compensation we *degrade* the restitution of the *otrezki* from an extraordinary, revolutionary measure to the most common-or-garden reform."

Lenin's motion was rejected by the editorial board by a majority of all against one (himself).

Afterwards, in discussing "The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy," Plekhanov made the following remark about compensation: "*Expropriation* does not exclude *compensation*; *compensation* does not exclude *expropriation*." Lenin retorted: "Expropriation usually implies *depriving* one of his property, *i.e.*, taking it without any compensation."

The clause concerning compensation as it stands in the programme was considerably improved as compared with the original draft Lenin had in view when introducing his amendment. The phrase about compensation "at the expense of the big landowners of the nobility" was absent in the original draft and was inserted afterwards. Speaking at the Third Congress about giving support to the peasant movement Lenin said: "We are definitely opposed to any sort of compensation." (Minutes of the Third Congress, p. 256.)

PAGE 316.* In 1899 Lenin wrote in a letter: "This 'new critical current' in Marxism, which attracts Struve and Bulgakov so much, seems to me to be highly suspicious."

Lenin's suspicions were very soon fully confirmed, when Bulgakov and other "legal Marxists" openly came out against Marxism and in particular against the Marxian doctrine of the development of agriculture and of class relations in the countryside. The starting point of Marx and Lenin was that, in spite of certain peculiarities, the development of agriculture is, in the main, subject to the same laws as that of industry. Even in backward regions agriculture has been drawn into the system of commodity production. In agriculture, as in industry, *large-scale* production offers advantages over *small-scale* production. The law of the concentration of capital obtains in agriculture as well as in industry. But Lenin points out that in distinguishing between large and small-scale production in agriculture, one should not start merely from the extent of the land area. "The main line of development of capitalist agriculture is precisely that, while *small-scale* farming *remains small* as regards its area, it becomes *large-scale* as regards output, the amount of livestock, the use of fertilizers, the use of machinery, etc." (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. XVII.) "The substitution of large for small-scale production takes the form of the substitution of farms that are 'small' as to their acreage but more productive, more intensive and more capitalistic, for farms that are 'large-scale' as far as the acreage is concerned, but less productive, less intensive and less capitalistic."

These economic developments in agriculture are accompanied by corresponding social changes in rural society: the class differentiation in

the village; the growth of a proletariat and a bourgeoisie as the result of the washing away of the middle rural strata; increased wealth at one end, pauperisation at the other; the increased application of wage-labour, etc. The capitalist development in the countryside is followed by the growth of all the contradictions inherent in capitalism: agricultural crises, the aggravation of the class struggle. It is on these grounds that Marx and Lenin drew the conclusion of the inevitability of the proletarian revolution in the countryside.

All these main points were called in question by the "fashionable critics of Marxism." David, Bernstein and others abroad, Bulgakov, Struve, etc., in Russia, maintained that agriculture was developing according to its own laws which were different from those that ruled industry.

The "critics" denied the application of the law of concentration to agriculture, and they set out to prove the great advantages of small over large-scale farming. They denied the growth of class differentiation and, consequently, the intensification of the class struggle. This naturally led the "critics" to deny the inevitability of the proletarian revolution and to argue that even under capitalism agriculture was beginning "peacefully to grow into socialism" with the aid of various kinds of co-operative organisations.

In "Messrs. the 'Critics' on the Agrarian Question" and in "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture," Lenin gave a detailed analysis of the views of the "critics." (See *Selected Works*, Vol. XII.)

PAGE 318.* The passage beginning: "Nationalisation of the land is a different matter" and ending "has landed Nadezhdin in a jungle of reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia" was the principal point of disagreement between Lenin and Plekhanov in the discussion of Lenin's article by the editors of *Iskra*; Lenin left it out in the article as it appeared in *Zarya*, No. 4.

Lenin emphasises two points on the question of nationalisation. First: the meaning and the nature of the slogan of nationalisation may differ according to the historical conditions in which it is advanced. At the time of a bourgeois-democratic revolution directed against serfdom, nationalisation, if linked up with revolutionary insurrection, may be a revolutionary measure. Secondly: under capitalism, land nationalisation is not by itself a socialist measure, as was imagined by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, but rather a condition for the accelerated development of capitalism. "The abolition of private property in land is as far as bourgeois society can go in eliminating the obstacles to the free application of capital to agriculture and to the free transfer of capital from one branch of production to another. A free, ample and rapid development for capitalism, complete freedom for the class struggle"—this was Lenin's definition of the aim of nationalisation. (See *Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. XI.)

The other editors of *Iskra* approached the question in an entirely different spirit. Plekhanov wrote in the margin of Lenin's manuscript: "In a police state, land *nationalisation* would be harmful, in a constitutional state it would become *part* of the demand for the *nationalisation* of all *means* of production." This amounted to rejecting *nationalisation* as the slogan of a revolutionary insurrection and to regarding it *only* as a socialist measure, as the "direct prologue to the *socialisation* of all means of production." (Martov's formula, endorsed by Plekhanov.)

This attitude showed that Plekhanov and the others were unable to grasp Marx's view of the matter, which was that land *nationalisation* only eliminated the class of landowners, and that in capitalist society the landowner was an entirely superfluous personage. Lenin strongly disagreed with the proposal, that was supported by *all* the other editors, that the anti-revolutionary nature of *nationalisation* should be pointed out; he was compelled to ignore the subject in his article and to leave out the passage referring to *nationalisation*.

That *nationalisation* is a blow at private property and may under certain circumstances become a measure contributing to the transition from a bourgeois-democratic revolution to a socialist revolution was subsequently repeatedly emphasised by Lenin.

PAGE 319.* This makes it clear that Lenin, in opposition to all the other editors of *Iskra*, in principle favoured the demand for land *nationalisation* as "going beyond" the restitution of the *otrezki* from the point of view of capitalist development. It also shows that in 1902, before the peasant uprisings in the South of Russia, Lenin believed *nationalisation* to be "politically inexpedient at the present moment." Subsequently, in 1903, in "To the Rural Poor," Lenin explicitly said that the restitution of the *otrezki* was not a barrier: "It is a door. We must pass through this door to be able to go further. . . ."

At the Third Congress of the Party (April-May 1905) a resolution moved by Lenin was passed on the attitude to be adopted towards the peasant movement. The resolution virtually amended the clause of the programme concerning the *otrezki*, for it stated that "the Social-Democrats set themselves the object of supporting as actively as they can all revolutionary measures of the peasantry which are capable of improving the position of the latter, including the confiscation of the land of the landlords, of the crown, of the church, of the monasteries and of the appanages." (Minutes of the Third Congress, p. 552.) Thus, it became a question of confiscating *all the landlords' land* and not only of that part of it which constitutes the *otrezki*. At the Fourth Congress Lenin introduced a new agrarian programme, in which he advocated land *nationalisation*. (See *Selected Works*, Vol. IV.)

PAGE 322.* On the eve of and during the Second Party Congress the fight for a consistent class Party programme was at the same time

the fight for a correctly formulated programme on the question of nationalities. It was then that the dissensions first became apparent which were to become so wide in the course of the discussions in 1913 and 1916. Lenin had to fight against the Right, against the "nationalist exaggerations" and the "vacillations" of the Bund, and against the Left, "against the clumsy attempt of a few Polish Social-Democrats to call in question the 'right of nations to self-determination.' . . ." (Lenin.)

"The National Question In Our Programme" was Lenin's answer to the criticism of the national programme of the R.S.D.L.P. expressed by the Polish Socialist Party. (On the P.P.S., see note to page 322.***) The latter advanced the unqualified demand for the secession of Poland regardless of time and circumstances; this was patently an undisguised defence of the nationalist aspirations of the Polish bourgeoisie. The P.P.S. opposed their views to those of the Polish Social-Democrats, who were against the secession of Poland from Russia on the equally anti-Marxian ground that it was not permissible for a proletarian party to recognise the right of nations to self-determination and secession as an independent state, which they declared to be incompatible with the international unity of the proletariat. In contradistinction to the nationalism of the P.P.S., as well as to the "Left" attitude of the Polish Social-Democrats, Lenin set forth, as a fundamental principle of the Party's attitude to nationalities, the recognition of the right to self-determination which, however, must be subordinated to the general class aims of the struggle carried on by the proletariat and must be determined by the historical situation in which that struggle develops. The ideas set forth by Lenin in the present article were subsequently further developed in the course of the discussions in 1913 and 1916, especially in "On the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (*Selected Works*, Vol. IV), "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (*ibid.*) and "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up" (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. XIX and in part in *Selected Works*, Vol. V).

PAGE 322.** The article referred to (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. V) is devoted to an analysis of the Manifesto of the then recently founded League of Armenian Social-Democrats, which formulated the question of nationalities, in the main, correctly. The substance of the article is reproduced in the text.

PAGE 322.*** The Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.) was formed in 1892. In 1906 it split into two groups: a Right wing (*prawica*), which was narrowly nationalistic and in 1919 became the P.P.S. which still exists, and a Left wing (*lewica*), which had leanings towards petty-bourgeois socialism but which gradually came over to Marxism. In 1918 a section of the *lewica* and the Social-Democratic Party of Poland united to form the Communist Party of Poland. The main point in the programme

of the P.P.S. was the establishment by the proletariat of an independent republic of Poland which would unite the three parts of Poland that had been annexed by Russia, Prussia and Austria. The means of obtaining this was armed insurrection against tsarism and terrorism against the agents of tsarism in Poland. The nationalistic and patriotic slogans of the P.P.S. found a favourable soil among the petty bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois revolutionary intelligentsia, as well as among certain sections of the Polish proletariat. The P.P.S. was in many ways similar to the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Today the P.P.S., while pretending to be in opposition to the fascist dictatorship of Pilsudski, in reality gives support to it and has become the channel of bourgeois influence among the proletariat.

PAGE 327.* In the forties and the sixties of the nineteenth century a revolutionary democratic movement was in progress for the liberation of Poland from Russian, Prussian and Austrian rule (Poland had been partitioned among these three countries). In January 1846 an insurrection broke out in Cracow which proved to be one of the forerunners of the wave of revolutionary movements which swept Western Europe and culminated in the French, German and Austrian Revolutions of 1848. In January 1863 this was repeated on a vastly larger scale when the Poles rose against the hangman's regime of oppression that had been introduced by Russian tsarism. Russia, against whom Polish democracy directed its offensive, was then the stronghold of reaction and the "gendarme of Europe." The reactionary role of tsarism was particularly effective at home because it had no revolutionary forces to oppose it; there was no mass revolutionary movement in Russia at that time. In the 'forties and 'sixties (and later at the time of the Paris Commune) Marx and Engels welcomed the movement for the liberation of Poland. They were in favour of the restoration of Poland for the following three reasons: a) the struggle of the Poles against Russia was not merely a Polish cause, but a cause that affected the whole of European democracy, for it was a struggle against the gendarme of Europe; b) the restoration of a democratic Poland would mean the establishment of a strong defensive barrier between reactionary Russia and democratic Europe: West European reaction, deprived of direct contact with Russian reaction, would be greatly weakened; c) "No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations." (Engels.) The liberation of the parts of Poland that were subject to Germany and Austria would deal a blow at reaction in those countries and destroy the mutual solidarity of the powers that had taken part in the "partition" of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century (Austria, Prussia and Russia); it unhooked, as it were, German and Austrian reaction from the chariot of the Emperor of Russia.

It goes without saying that Marx and Engels considered revolution

to be the only possible method of solving the Polish question. The absence of a revolutionary movement in Russia was the reason Marx and Engels advocated a "revolutionary war" of Germany against Russia for the liberation of Poland. Marx's and Engels' formulation of the question was the result of a concrete historical analysis; their demand for Polish independence was subordinated to the interests of the revolution; it was a link in their revolutionary programme. Hence the polemics, referred to by Lenin, of Marx against Ruge. The latter was a bourgeois democrat, a German man of letters and a member of the Left wing of the Frankfort Parliament. In the course of a three-day debate on the Polish question in that parliament, he made a bombastic speech in which, instead of proceeding from a historical analysis of the concrete situation, or from the interests of the revolution, he appealed to abstract principles of justice and of the unity (supposed unity) of the three great European countries, France, England and Germany. Marx who was at that time, jointly with Engels, editor of *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, published an article in that paper, entitled "The Debate on the Polish Question in Frankfort," in which he submitted Ruge's standpoint to devastating criticism. This is what Lenin refers to when he says: "Marx violently attacked Ruge."

PAGE 330.* This refers to the time of the Paris Commune. "The government of national defence" was formed in Paris on September 4, 1870, after the French parliament, acting under the pressure of the insurgent people, had proclaimed the deposition of Napoleon III who had been taken prisoner by the Germans. It was a government of the Paris bourgeoisie. Its object was to carry on the war which had been started by Napoleon III and was virtually lost by that time, and to defend Paris and the whole country from the German invasion. But at the same time a movement of the artisans, of the petty bourgeoisie generally and especially of the proletariat, was growing in Paris, which the bourgeoisie considered far more dangerous than the German army that had besieged Paris (the siege began in September 1870). To be able to crush the workers' movement the "government of national defence" decided to surrender Paris to the Germans. All the measures it took to defend the town were mere pretence. In fact, the government of national defence was a government of national treason. The result of this sort of "defence" was that Paris was ultimately forced to capitulate (January 28, 1871) on dishonourable terms. By the terms of the capitulation the Germans occupied part of the forts. Subsequently this greatly facilitated the task of the bourgeoisie of crushing the Paris Commune, which was a government organised, for the first time in history, on the basis of proletarian dictatorship.

PAGE 332.* The nationalism of the Bund, which revealed itself in the course of the debate on the Party programme, grew into separatism, i.e.,

a tendency to secede organisationally from Russian Social-Democracy. On the eve of and at the Second Party Congress, Lenin had to wage a fierce struggle against the Bund. It resulted in the withdrawal of the delegates of the Bund from the Congress and from the R.S.D.L.P., to which the Bund had been affiliated ever since the First Congress (1898).

In "Does the Jewish Proletariat Need an 'Independent Political Party'?" Lenin denounced these separatist tendencies of the Bund and all the harm they did to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.

On the question of nationalities, as on the question of organisation, the Bund gave first consideration to "national" (or rather nationalist) interests. For Lenin, in both cases, the principal thing was the general interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. And it was to these interests that he subordinated the right of nations to self-determination as well as the organisational principles of the Party.

The lessons of the struggle against the Bund in 1902-03 have not yet lost their significance. The organisational relations of the C.P.S.U. with the Communist Parties of the various nationalities of the Soviet Union are based today on the same principles for which Lenin fought in the early years of the century, *viz.*, the national Communist Parties are autonomous in local matters, but are subject to the centralised leadership of a single Central Committee, and not on the principles the Bund stood for, *viz.*, federations of separate, virtually independent parties, with a Central Committee composed of representatives of the affiliated parties who would be subject to recall and responsible, not to the Party as a whole, but only to the organisation that elected them.

PAGE 332.** The Fourth Congress of the Bund met in April 1901. The resolution it passed concerning the place of the Bund in the R.S.D.L.P. said: "Considering the R.S.D.L.P. to be a federal union of Social-Democratic Parties of all the nationalities inhabiting the Russian Empire, the Congress resolves that the Bund, being the representative of the Jewish proletariat, is affiliated to the R.S.D.L.P. as a federated section thereof and charges the Central Committee of the Bund to carry out this decision in practice." The withdrawal of the Bund from the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, which Lenin refers to, was the logical consequence of this resolution. The following, Fifth Congress of the Bund, which met in 1903, drew up a detailed plan for the organisation of the R.S.D.L.P. on a federal basis on the principle of the federal organisation of Social-Democratic Parties adopted by its Fourth Congress. The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. rejected the plan (which represented the maximum demands of the Bund), as well as the demand of the Bundist delegates that at least the relation of the Bund with the Party be established on a federal basis (their minimum programme). This led to the withdrawal of the Bund from the Congress and its disaffiliation from the Party.

PAGE 335.* This refers to Kautsky's pamphlet *Die soziale Revolution*, which appeared in German in 1902 and was translated into Yiddish.

PAGE 341.* The Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Party occupies a special place in the history of Bolshevism because it was at this Congress that the split took place between the revolutionary Leninist "majority" and the opportunist "minority" and the foundation of the Bolshevik Party, as a separate party, was laid. In his "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Lenin wrote: "Bolshevism, as a trend of political thought and as a political party, exists since 1903." In saying this he had in mind the split that took place at the Second Party Congress. This split marked the beginning of a party of a new type, and of its development into the guiding force of a broad revolutionary movement. This party was, in principle, different from the parties affiliated to the Second International ("a party of a new type under no circumstances *à la* Second International," as Lenin once wrote), and was the only party capable of being the real vanguard of the revolutionary class and of leading it "in the most ruthless, determined and last fight against all the forces of capitalism." (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. XXV.) This split also marked the beginning of the policy of breaking with the opportunists in the Russian Social-Democratic Party as well as in the Second International which, as Comrade Stalin says in his "Letter to the *Proletarskaya Revolutsiya*" (See *Leninism*, Vol. II), has been conducted by Lenin and the Bolsheviks "approximately since 1903-04," and without which the victory of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union, and the formation of the Communist International, this fundamental condition of the victory of the world revolution, would have been impossible. This is the principal significance of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.

The Second Congress and its immediate result, the formation of Bolshevism into a political party, were prepared by the enormous work which was carried on under the direct leadership of Lenin by *Iskra*. (See note to page 3.*) It was *Iskra*, also under the direct leadership of Lenin, that made all the direct organisational preparations for the Congress. At the beginning of 1902, the editorial board of *Iskra* and *Zarya* proceeded to draw up the draft of a Party programme, which was ultimately published in *Iskra* in the summer of 1902. In the spring of that year (March-April) *Iskra* took the first steps towards setting up an Organisation Committee for the Second Congress. At that time the League of Social-Democrats Abroad (the "Economists"), jointly with the Bund, made a second attempt to convene the Second Congress (the first attempt was made by the League in May 1901, but was unsuccessful). The enormous educational and organisational work undertaken by *Iskra* had been far from completed, and the Social-Democratic organisations in Russia had not yet matured sufficiently to be organised into a single party. The

attempt made to convene the Second Congress, therefore, prematurely threatened to retard the work undertaken by *Iskra* and to disrupt its work of rallying the Social-Democratic forces and building the Party. *Iskra* agreed to take part in the proposed congress in order to try to have it converted into a preliminary conference, and this it succeeded in doing. Owing to the small number of representatives present at the Congress, which was convened in the town of Byelostok, it was agreed, on the proposal of the representative of *Iskra*, to declare the gathering a conference exclusively for the purpose of setting up an Organisation Committee for convening the Second Congress. (See note to page 411.)* This first attempt to set up an Organisation Committee failed, for all the members elected to this Committee were arrested soon after the conference. Only at the end of 1902 was it found possible to restore the Committee at a conference convened in Pskov on the initiative of *Iskra*. (See note to page 342.)* From that moment, not only was the immediate work of preparing for the Second Congress begun, but so also was the actual amalgamation of the local organisations; the Organisation Committee not only served as an organising centre for convening the Congress, but also as a centre for maintaining contact between, and leading the current work of, the local organisations.

All the practical preparatory work of convening the Second Congress lay on the shoulders of the *Iskra* organisation and the *Iskra* agents in the districts, who travelled from town to town setting up *Iskra* committees, organising the technique of Party work, establishing contacts, organising the shipment of literature, etc. Among these *Iskra* "agents" were professional revolutionaries such as S. Radchenko, L. B. Krassin, R. S. Zemlyachka, S. Bobrovsky, J. Pyatnitsky, I. Babushkin and others. All the threads of practical and ideological leadership were concentrated in the hands of the editorial board of *Iskra*, the actual leader of which was Lenin; he was assisted by a small group of comrades (N. Krupskaya and others).

After nearly three years of practical work and of ideological leadership of the organisations in Russia by *Iskra*, the Organisation Committee, on July 30, 1903, convened the Second Congress abroad at which, with few exceptions, all the active Russian Social-Democratic organisations (committees and leagues) were able to be represented. The majority of the representatives were adherents of *Iskra*, i.e., the revolutionary trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement.

The task at the Second Congress was to consolidate the victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy over ideological confusion and vacillation and over the opportunist elements, and to consolidate, on the basis of revolutionary Marxian principles, the leadership of the struggles of the proletariat in the impending Russian revolution. The fulfilment of this fundamental task opened a new epoch in the history of the revolutionary movement of the Russian working class and in the history of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

The Second Congress did great positive work in actually creating a proletarian party: it adopted the general theoretical principles of *Iskra*, adopted a programme, drew up a set of rules (in doing so, however, it distorted Lenin's draft of the rules, by adopting the opportunist formulation of point 1 proposed by Martov) and set up organs of Party leadership.

It was in the process of this work that the Congress, and soon after, the R.S.D.L.P., split into a "majority" led by Lenin and a "minority" led by Martov and Axelrod and subsequently by Plekhanov. The "minority," the leaders of which differed with Lenin on a number of questions even before the Congress while they were working together on *Iskra*, proved incapable of the task of building up a proletarian party with a strict class selection of membership, with militant centralism and with iron proletarian discipline. The minority of the Second Congress revived, on a new basis and in a new form, the opportunist trend in the ranks of Russian Social-Democracy represented in the past, when the Party was in its embryonic state, by "Economism," "legal Marxism," the nationalism and federalism of the Bund and anarchist individualism, which had been attacked and defeated by *Iskra* politically and organisationally. The process of building up the revolutionary party of the proletariat had still to pass through the stern period of the hardening of the future cadres of the Party in the severe struggle against the new form of opportunism personified by the minority at the Second Congress. This was the positive significance of the period of the split in the R.S.D.L.P. that was opened by the Second Congress. These were the birth pangs of the Bolshevik Party, the genuinely revolutionary party of the Russian proletariat.

PAGE 341.** "An Account of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P." is Lenin's report of the results of the Second Congress written for a small circle of political friends, adherents of the majority. The "Account" was written within a few days after the Congress, under the fresh impression of the struggle inside the Party which had broken out at the Congress and which became the starting point for the split in the Party into a majority and a minority. The postscript to the "Account" tells of the disruptive activity of the minority during the first two or three weeks after the Congress.

"The split among the *Iskra*-ists was one of the principal political results of the Congress"—such is Lenin's estimate of the main outcome of the Second Party Congress. The whole history of the Party during the ensuing fifteen years fully confirmed the importance of this fundamental political result of the Congress. In the course of the struggle and split at the Second Congress the "firm *Iskra*-ists" became the nucleus of the Bolshevik Party.

PAGE 341.*** The St. Petersburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. is here referred to by its old name of the League of Struggle (for the Emancipation of the Working Class). The Committee had been controlled by the Economists and at the time of the Second Congress the struggle between the revolutionary (*Iskra*-ist) and the opportunist (Economist) tendencies had not yet come to a head: the Committee was on the side of *Iskra*, but besides the Committee there was a so-called Workers' Organisation which was controlled by the Economists. Thus, the St. Petersburg Committee (or League) was represented by two delegates: one, Lydia Makhnovets-Brooker, an adherent of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, i.e., an Economist, representing the Workers' Organisation, and here referred to by Lenin, and the other, Shotman, representing *Iskra*, included by Lenin in the 33 *Iskra*-ists mentioned a few lines lower down in the text.

PAGE 341.**** The *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists were the members and representatives of the group of Social-Democratic writers that edited the *Yuzhny Rabochy* (*The Southern Worker*). It had considerable influence in the South of Russia and had the support of the Social-Democratic organisations of the South, especially of the Ekaterinoslav and Kharkov Committees. No. 1 of *Yuzhny Rabochy* appeared in January 1900. At the time of the Second Congress the persons active in the organisational and literary work of the group were V. N. Rozanov, E. Y. Levin and E. S. Levin, who also represented it at the Congress. The political views of *Yuzhny Rabochy* were nearer to those of *Iskra* than were those of the Economists; it differed from the latter in that it recognised the revolutionary political aims of the working class and the necessity of overthrowing tsarism. But in organisational matters the group did not share the *Iskra*-ist methods of building the Party (centralism) and wanted to preserve and reinforce its independence. After the Congress most of the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists joined the Mensheviks and worked against the decisions of the Congress.

PAGE 342.* The Organisation Committee for convening the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. was first formed at the Byelostok Conference of 1902. (See note to page 411.)* It consisted of representatives of the organisations that took part in that Conference. But with the exception of the St. Petersburg delegate V. P. Krasnukha, all the delegates to the Conference, including the entire membership of the Organisation Committee, were arrested shortly after the Conference. The O.C. was reconstituted at a conference which met in Pskov at the beginning of November 1902. It consisted at first of three members—V. P. Krasnukha (St. Petersburg Committee), E. Y. Levin (*Yuzhny Rabochy*) and I. I. Radchenko (*Iskra*).

As a result of several successive co-optations, necessitated by the arrest of its members, the O.C. underwent considerable changes. By the time the Congress met it consisted of the following: G. M. Krzhizhanovskiy, F. V. Lengnik, P. A. Krasikov and E. M. Alexandrova—representing

the *Iskra* organisation in Russia; V. N. Rozanov and E. Y. Levin—representing the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group, and K. Portnoy, representing the Bund. All these, except Krzhizhanovsky and Lengnik, were present at the Congress.

PAGE 342.** The standing orders of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., which defined its functions, how it was to be constituted, the method of representation of the local organisations, the rights and duties of the delegates, the method of inviting persons with a consultative vote, the method of fixing the place and time of the opening, the process of opening the Congress, etc., had been drawn up beforehand by the O.C., circulated among the committees for discussion and endorsed by the great majority of these. The text of the standing orders, accompanied by an explanatory memorandum, appeared as a supplement to the Minutes of the Second Congress.

PAGE 342.*** The credentials commission of the Congress was elected at the first session immediately after the report of the O.C. had been read; it included: L. G. Deutsch, N. K. Krupskaya (Sablina), V. I. Lenin, I. A. Eizenstadt (Yudin, a Bundist) and B. A. Koltsov.

PAGE 344.* The *Borba* group (Group of Struggle) was a group of Russian Social-Democratic writers who were living abroad, and consisted of D. B. Ryazanov, J. M. Steklov and E. L. Danevich-Gurevich; it was formed in Paris in the beginning of 1901. At first the members of the group contributed to *Iskra* and *Zarya*. After unsuccessful attempts to establish a federal connection with the editorial board of *Iskra* (i.e., to become members of the latter with special rights for the *Borba* group) and attempts, equally unsuccessful, to unite the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad with *Iskra*, the *Borba* group came out as an independent literary group of Social-Democrats distinct from the League as well as from *Iskra*, and tried to occupy an intermediate position between the two. But in reality this was an opportunist position devoid of any foundation or principle in theory, organisation and the strategy and tactics of the Party. Thus, the *Borba* group was violently opposed to the organisational ideas of *Iskra*. It was equally opposed to the strategy and tactics of the latter and to its view of the role of the proletariat in the leadership of the democratic revolution. At the Second Congress the *Borba* group was dissolved, along with all the other groups. The most prominent personality in the group, Ryazanov, continued to occupy the same sort of unprincipled position; he remained an anti-Leninist. In 1930 he was expelled from the C.P.S.U. as a traitor to the Party.

PAGE 348.* The episode in connection with the "equal status of languages" occurred at the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Congress and was not finally cleared up till the twenty-first session. At the sixteenth

session, when the Party programme was being discussed point by point, a dispute arose about point 7 of the political part of the programme which had been drafted as follows by the Programme Committee: "The abolition of 'estates' and complete, equal rights for all citizens, regardless of sex, religion, race, nationality or language." The opposition, headed by the delegates of the Bund, was not satisfied with the mere addition of the words "nationality or language" at the end of the paragraph and demanded the introduction of a clause in the programme in favour of equality of languages. After a prolonged debate which took up two sessions (the sixteenth and seventeenth) and after three votes by roll call, which revealed a certain instability in the ranks of the *Iskra*-ists, a motion introduced by Martynov was finally passed by a majority of 26 against 25 which referred the point to the Committee to be redrafted.

PAGE 348.** The *Tagesordnung* (agenda) of the Second Congress had been drawn up by Lenin several weeks before it met. It was accompanied by explanatory notes to each item. Lenin communicated his draft to Martov who suggested a few amendments, some of which Lenin accepted. Lenin's final draft was submitted to the *Iskra*-ist nucleus before the Congress, and to all the delegates at the Congress. Lenin reported on his draft agenda at the meeting of the O.C., and the latter passed it without any important changes; it was introduced at the Congress by the O.C. and adopted by the Congress.

PAGE 349.* The reference is to the resolution moved by Martov and passed by the Congress on the conclusion of the debate on the place of the Bund in the Party. The *federalism* of the Bund was the Bund's desire to be affiliated to the R.S.D.L.P. on a federal basis, i.e., to preserve, by a special treaty with the Party, certain special rights as compared with the other organisations, and primarily the right to be the sole representative of the interests of the Jewish proletariat in the Party. The resolution that was passed by the Congress definitely stated that "a reconstruction of the organisational relations between the Jewish and the Russian proletariat on a federal basis would be a serious obstacle in the path of the further organisational *rapprochement* among the class conscious proletarians of different races, and would inevitably greatly prejudice the interests of the proletariat of Russia in general and of its Jewish section in particular"; for this reason it definitely rejected "as absolutely inadmissible in principle the very idea of federal relations between the R.S.D.L.P. and the Bund as a component part of the latter." (See notes to pages 332* and 332.**)

PAGE 350.* The *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ist, Akimov-Makhnovets (as Lenin points out), repeated in two of his speeches on point 1 of the rules (twenty*

second and twenty-third sessions) his reasons for voting in favour of Martov's wording. In the former he said: "I endorse the wording proposed by Martov not because it precisely formulates what I consider the desirable relations between the Party and its organisations, but because it takes a step in the direction of a satisfactory solution of the problem" (satisfactory according to *Rabocheye Dyelo*—in the direction of greater "democracy"). In his second speech Akimov gave the following reason for supporting Martov's wording: "Comrades Martov and Lenin dispute which wording is better suited to obtain the end both of them want; Brooker and I want to choose that which is the less conducive to that end. From this point of view I choose Martov's."

PAGE 351.* The final list of candidates for the C.C. proposed by the "firm" majority was: Krzhizhanovsky, Lengnik and Neskov. This list was elected by the Congress to the C.C. The persons elected to the editorial board of the C.O. were Plekhanov, Lenin and Martov. After Martov's refusal to accept the appointment, the Congress agreed to the proposal of Pavlovich (P. Krasikov) that the third editor be co-opted by the two that had been elected (*viz.*, Plekhanov and Lenin).

PAGE 352.* The point at issue on the question of co-optation of members to the central bodies (which arose in the course of the debate on point 12 of the rules) was as follows: Lenin proposed that co-optation to the C.C. and to the editorial board of the C.O. be made by each of these central bodies subject to the consent of the other (reciprocal co-optation). At the twenty-sixth session he used the following arguments to prove that reciprocal co-optation was important and necessary: "What is infinitely more important is that the C.C. and the C.O. be given the right to control each other's co-optation. The mutual agreement of the two centres is the necessary condition for harmony. The issue at stake is a rupture between the two centres. Whoever is opposed to a split must do his best to secure harmony. The history of the Party teaches us that there have been people who worked for a split. The issue is one of principle, an important issue, for the future of the Party may depend on it." Lenin's amendment to the effect that co-optation could only be allowed "subject to the unanimous consent of all the members of the Council of the Party" was rejected, and the majority voted for Martov's amendment which provided that in the absence of agreement between the C.C. and the C.O. the matter be brought before the Council of the Party, and, if the Council revoked the decision of the C.C. or of the C.O., the question was to be decided by a simple majority.

PAGE 352.** At the twenty-seventh session of the Congress, after point 13 of the rules, which recognised the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad (see next note) as the sole organisation of the R.S.D.L.P. outside Russia, had been passed, the *Rabocheye Dyelo* dele-

gates, Martynov and Akimov-Makhnovets (the delegates of the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad) handed in to the Bureau of the Congress the following statement: "Inasmuch as we recognise that by passing point 13 with the amendment [inclusion of the word: "sole"] the Congress has indirectly expressed the decision to dissolve the League before hearing its report and before discussing the relevant item of the agenda concerning the endorsement of the existing Party organisations, we, the delegates of the League, refuse to take any further part in the debates and votes and will remain at the Congress only to hear the minutes of the previous sessions and to discuss the method of their publication." After a debate on this statement and the passing of a resolution inviting them to withdraw it, Martynov and Akimov left the Congress.

PAGE 352.*** The League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad was the organisation of the revolutionary wing of the Russian Social-Democrats outside Russia. It was formed in October 1901 after the failure of the attempt to amalgamate the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad with the Emancipation of Labour group, the revolutionary organisation of *Sotsial-Demokrat* and the section of *Iskra* and *Zarya* abroad, at a joint congress of these organisations. (See note to page 27.)* According to its original rules, the League was "the section of the *Iskra* organisation abroad" and its activities consisted mainly in "contributing to the publication and circulation of *Iskra* and *Zarya*," in the "propaganda outside Russia of the ideas of revolutionary Social-Democracy," in "assisting, with the aid of the *Iskra* organisation in Russia, the Social-Democratic organisations in Russia by training militant workers." After the Second Congress of the Party the League became the stronghold and the instrument of the minority in the fight against the majority.

PAGE 356.* The boycott of the central bodies of the Party by the Martovists was inaugurated by Martov, while the Congress was still sitting, when he refused to accept his election to the editorial board of the C.O. After the Congress it found expression in Martov's refusing the repeated invitations of Lenin and Plekhanov to take his seat on the editorial board and in the refusal of a number of his adherents to accept nomination for posts connected with the C.C. (For further details see note to page 366.)*

PAGE 357.* The Martovists cut off the financial supplies of the C.C. and the C.O. by closing access for the central bodies of the Party to those sources of money (i.e., those persons who sympathised with and rendered material assistance to the Party) which were personally connected with Martov and with Potresov, one of the ex-editors of *Iskra*. One of these constant sources of funds for the old *Iskra* was A. M. Kalmykova, a social worker, and the publisher in the 'nineties of legal Marxian books, as well as of

popular books of knowledge in general. She had been a friend of Lenin, Martov and Potresov long before *Iskra* was started.

PAGE 358.* The speeches here reproduced—the brief report on the rules of the Party, the speech during the discussion of point 1 of the rules and the speech on the elections to the editorial board of the C.O.—express the line followed at the Congress by Lenin and by the “firm” *Iskra*-ist majority, in their fight for unity, for the firmness and the purity of the membership of the Party, against the “penetration” of petty-bourgeois elements into the Party, for rigorous centralism, for firm revolutionary discipline, against the circle spirit of the intellectuals and against anarchist individualism.

PAGE 358.** Lenin was responsible for the draft rules of the Party which were discussed by the commission and subsequently at the plenary session of the Congress. The present speech, which is a brief general statement on the rules, was delivered at the first session held after the Congress removed to London from Brussels.

PAGE 358.*** This speech was made in defence of the formulation of point 1 of the rules proposed by Lenin in answer to a number of opponents who had spoken in favour of Martov's formulation. It was made at the twenty-third session of the Congress.

PAGE 359.* Axelrod's speech, to which Lenin replies in the beginning of his speech had been made at the preceding twenty-second session. Axelrod ended by saying: “As formulated by Lenin, point 1 is in direct contradiction in principle to the very essence and to the objects of the Social-Democratic Party of the proletariat. But I see that I am knocking at an open door, for Comrade Lenin's suggestion of peripheric circles considered as part of the Party organisation is a step to meet me. There remain isolated individuals, but even here we can hope to strike a bargain.” The phrase “peripheric circles” refers to a short statement previously made by Lenin at the same session in which he defended his formulation of point 1 of the rules. It appears in the minutes as follows: “*Lenin* briefly defends his formulation, emphasising in particular that it gives a stimulus to ‘becoming organised.’ It should not be imagined that Party organisations must consist exclusively of professional revolutionaries. We want a great variety of organisations of the most varied kinds, ranks and shades, from exceedingly narrow and secret ones to very broad and free, *lose organisationen* (loose organisations). The necessary mark of a Party organisation is that it be confirmed by the Central Committee.”

PAGE 359.** Lenin proposed that point 1 be formulated as follows: “A member of the R.S.D.L.P. is one who recognises its programme and

supports the Party materially as well as by *personal participation in one of the organisations of the Party.*" Martov formulated his proposal as follows: "A member of the R.S.D.L.P. is one who recognises its programme and supports the Party materially as well as *by working under the control and guidance of one of the organisations of the Party.*" We have italicised the divergent phrases in the two formulations.

PAGE 359.*** In replying to Trotsky who, at the twenty-third session of the Congress, spoke immediately before him, Lenin said that "Trotsky has completely misunderstood the fundamental idea advanced by Plekhanov" (who had spoken earlier in the day). Plekhanov's main contention, when speaking against Martov's formulation and in favour of Lenin's, was expressed in the conclusion of his speech as follows: "Neither am I able to understand why it is imagined that Lenin's proposal, if passed, would close our Party to any considerable number of workers. A worker who wants to join the Party will not be deterred by having to join an organisation. A worker is not afraid of discipline. The people who will be deterred will be the intellectuals who are permeated with bourgeois individualism. And it is a very good thing that they will be deterred. As a rule, these bourgeois individualists are also the spokesmen of every kind of opportunism. We must keep them at a distance. Lenin's proposal may become a barrier against their invading the Party, and this alone makes it imperative for all opponents of opportunism to vote in favour of it."

PAGE 362.* This speech was delivered by Lenin at the end of the Congress, at the thirty-first session, on September 2 (August 20). At the preceding session, all the members of the editorial board of *Iskra* being absent, the Congress discussed the methods of setting up the editorial board of the C.O.: either by endorsing the whole of the previous editorial board or by electing a "group of three" which could later co-opt the required number of members. At the beginning of the session a vote was taken on this question and Trotsky's motion "to endorse the whole of the old editorial board" was rejected. After the vote was taken the members of the editorial board were invited to enter the Congress hall and the decision was announced to them. After this, Martov made a "declaration in the name of the majority of the former editorial board" to the effect that four of the former editors (Martov, Potresov, Axelrod and Zasulich) emphatically refused to work on the new editorial board, that they regarded the election of Martov to the new editorial board as a personal slur on his reputation, and that, according to Martov, the decision of the Congress not to endorse the former editorial board and to elect a "group of three" in its place meant the introduction of a "state of siege in the Party and the introduction of exceptional laws against certain groups." The speech given here is Lenin's reply to Martov, and the whole of the

opposition at the Congress which he led, on the question of the elections to the central bodies of the Party. In this speech Lenin gives the first political characterisation of the minority.

PAGE 366.* In the course of the first six weeks after the Second Congress (from the end of August to the beginning of October) the new editorial board (Lenin and Plekhanov) and the elected members of the Central Committee (Noskov and Lengnik) made repeated attempts to induce Martov to take part in the work of the editorial board and to induce his adherents to contribute to *Iskra*, and in this way to stop the incipient split in the Party. But all these attempts on the part of the editorial board of the C.O. and of the C.C. to put an end to the incipient dissension and actual split in the Party from the very outset, notwithstanding the concessions the central bodies were prepared to make to the minority, failed as a consequence of the obstinacy of the leaders of the minority group abroad, headed by Martov, who strove to secure predominance in the central bodies of the Party and made excessive demands during the negotiations.

While the minority was displaying this unyielding attitude in the negotiations with the central bodies of the Party, they secretly rallied and organised their forces (i.e., formation of a faction within the Party) and carried on an active struggle to seize the Party leadership. Between September 13 and 20, a three-day conference was held in Geneva of seventeen prominent representatives of the minority who were then abroad. This conference drew up a definite programme of action which was binding on all the adherents of the minority. This programme set forth, as the main task, the capture of all the organs of Party leadership, and the means proposed to achieve this were: penetration into the Party committees, agitation in the districts against the C.O. and the C.C., systematic boycott of the central bodies of the Party as constituted at the Congress and the establishment of their own press organ.

The methods used by the minority in their fight against the central bodies and against the majority included the attempt to capture the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad. The minority made this their first practical objective, inasmuch as the ordinary congress of the League was soon to be held in accordance with the rules. The minority succeeded in having the congress called, and it was held at Geneva from October 26 to 31, 1903.

PAGE 376.* The resolution moved by Starover read as follows: "The R.S.D.L.P., the independent political party of the proletariat, basing itself on that point of its programme which states that the Party 'will support every opposition and revolutionary movement directed against the social and political order existing in Russia,' will not refuse to enter into a temporary agreement with any liberal or liberal democratic move-

ment and will, if the necessity arises, enter into such an agreement through its central bodies provided: a) that the movement in question states clearly and unambiguously that in the fight against the autocracy it definitely takes the side of Russian Social-Democracy; b) that its programme includes no demands that might run counter to the interests of the working class or of democracy in general, or that might obscure the consciousness of these, and c) that it adopts for its slogan universal, equal suffrage and secret and direct ballot."

The other resolution drafted by Plekhanov, and supported by the delegates of the majority only, was as follows: "Taking into consideration: a) that Social-Democracy must support the bourgeoisie to the extent to which the latter is revolutionary, or even merely oppositional in its fight against tsarism; b) that Social-Democracy must consequently welcome the awakening of the political consciousness of the Russian bourgeoisie; but that on the other hand, that it is its duty to expose to the proletariat the limited and inadequate character of the emancipation movement of the bourgeoisie wherever this limited and inadequate character finds expression—the Second ordinary Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. urgently advises all comrades in their propaganda to draw the attention of the workers to the anti-revolutionary and anti-proletarian character of the ideas that found expression in Mr. P. Struve's journal."

PAGE 378.* *Iskra*, No. 53, was the first number to appear under the new editorial board that had been co-opted by Plekhanov (the four previous editors—Martov, Potresov, Axelrod and Zasulich) on December 8 (November 25), 1903. Lenin became finally convinced that the Martovists had taken *Iskra* "for war" against the majority. The political complexion of the new editorial group and the position of the new *Iskra* as regards the situation inside the Party are best illustrated by two articles in that issue: the leading article, entitled "Our Congress," written by Martov (see note to page 380*) and an editorial note written by Plekhanov in the "Party News" section in reply to Lenin's letter to the editors, which appeared in the issue commenting on Plekhanov's article "What Should Not Be Done?." Immediately after perusing No. 53, apparently between December 21 and 23 (8 and 10), Lenin jotted down "A Note on the Position of the New *Iskra*" which we here reproduce. The note remained in his papers and was not directly used for the press.

PAGE 378.** The reference to the Congress of the League indicates that it was particularly at this Congress that the minority revealed itself as a "party of rejected Ministers or hysterical rowdies."

PAGE 380.* "Our Congress" by Martov—which appeared in *Iskra*, No. 53, and called forth from Lenin the first reply in "A Note on the Position of the New *Iskra*" referred to above—criticised the decision of the Sec-

ond Congress from the standpoint of the minority. It accused the majority of interpreting centralism in a formal and bureaucratic way, attempted to minimise the importance of the Congress and entirely distorted the cause of the dissensions that had arisen at the Congress, of the fight started after the Congress between the majority and the minority and, in particular, Lenin's reasons for resigning from the editorial board. In his letter "Why I resigned from the Editorial Board of *Iskra*," Lenin answers Martov by giving an account of the actual course of events at the Congress which led to the split in the *Iskra*-ist organisation, as well as the subsequent facts and events after the Congress which further aggravated the split.

Lenin intended the letter for the following issue of *Iskra* (No. 54). But Martov, acting in the name of the editorial board, refused to print it, hypocritically giving as his reason that the letter referred to facts of Party life which "must not be discussed in the columns of the Party press as long as there is any hope of eliminating the conflict inside the Party." This is why Lenin's letter had to be printed by the *Iskra* press as a separate leaflet and circulated in this form in Russia and abroad. The open letter "Why I Resigned from the Editorial Board of *Iskra*" was Lenin's first public explanation addressed to wide Party circles of the nature and significance of the dissensions at the Second Congress.

PAGE 382.* The reference is to the abstention of the whole coalition of the minority and the non-*Iskra*-ists (a total of 20 votes) at the election of the C.C., of the editors of the C.O. (at the thirty-first session) and of a fifth member of the Council of the Party (at the thirty-second session). Only the delegates of the majority voted at these elections, and they alone elected the central bodies.

PAGE 383.* "A Robespierre regime of executions," to which the writers of the minority (in the writings enumerated in the preceding note) likened the line taken by Lenin in his fight for a firm, united and centralised Party leadership, was the dictatorship of the revolutionary party of the Jacobins (the Mountain or *Montagnards*) led by Robespierre, who used terror (which took the form of executions by the guillotine) on a vast scale against the enemies of the Revolution (including the Girondists). (See note to page 34.)*

PAGE 384.* The exceptional measures taken by the C.C. against the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad were the following: 1) At the last meeting of the League (October 31 [18]), F. V. Lengnik, the representative of the C.C. abroad, declared the further continuation of the Congress out of order, and then formally dissolved the Congress, which he left together with the other members of the League who adhered

to the majority; 2) on the following day (November 1 [October 19]) the Council of the Party endorsed the action of the representative of the C.C. abroad as well as his proposal to reorganise the League by introducing new members; 3) finally, for a whole month after the Congress of the League, the C.C. in the person of its representative refused to recognise the new Administrative Council that had been elected by the minority half of the Congress of the League after the withdrawal of the majority, while the agents of the C.C. outside Russia and the members of the League who supported the majority boycotted the League. All these measures were provoked by the openly disruptive behaviour of the minority half of the Congress of the League towards the C.C.

PAGE 384.** We know that this "good peace" was not established. For the immediate consequences of the further aggravation of the split between the revolutionary Leninist majority and the opportunist minority see, in this volume, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, chapter R, *Something About Dialectics, Two Revolutions*.

PAGE 388.* After *Iskra* had passed under the control of the minority, the minority started a hue and cry against Lenin in their paper and at meetings abroad. They conducted a systematic attack on the C.C. by waging a petty "war" against its representative abroad in connection with the practical everyday work and by sending emissaries to Russia to agitate in the committees against the C.C. With this object they organised a transport service of their own to convey persons and literature over the frontier. Immediately after the appearance of *Iskra*, No. 53, Lenin, on December 23 (10), wrote to the members of the C.C. in Russia stating that the minority showed no signs of desiring peace and that from the outset the minority had begun to use the C.O. for war against the C.C. He proposed the calling of a special Party congress to the C.C. as the immediate task of the moment. He pointed out that a fight against the disruption in the Party, which the minority was openly and systematically causing through *Iskra* and in connection with practical work in the centres and in the local committees, would provide a stirring battle cry for the congress. The answer he expected did not arrive as soon as the situation demanded. Knowing as he did the conciliatory attitude of the members of the C.C. Lenin lost no time in doing his best to influence them and to convince them that his view of the situation, as well as the way out which he proposed, was the right one.

PAGE 388.** The Executive Committee of the C.C. was formed in the middle of October (shortly after the first co-optation). It consisted of three members. They were G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, L. B. Krassin and F. V. Gusarov (the latter two were co-opted members of the C.C.).

PAGE 388.*** In a letter from Russia dated December 7 (November 24),

V. A. Noskov (Boris) wrote to F. V. Lengnik: "I send you the expression of my profound joy about the conclusion of peace."

PAGE 388.**** The phrase about "insults hurled at the C.C. from abroad (by the League)" alludes to the fact that up to that time it was the League that was the stronghold and organising centre of the opposition. At the Congress of the League its Menshevik majority hurled a number of insults at the C.C. It refused to recognise the right of the C.C. to confirm the rules of the League, treated with contempt the proposal of the representative of the C.C. abroad to introduce necessary changes in the new rules, and refused to submit to the latter's demand to discontinue the meetings of the Congress after this incident.

PAGE 389.* "To get rid of the League" meant putting an end to its unworthy role of jumping-off ground in the fight of the opposition against the C.C. which the League played because of its Menshevik majority; it meant putting the League in its proper place as a local Party organisation, committed to obey the decisions of the Congress and of the central bodies of the Party.

PAGE 390.* This refers to a proposal not to publish anything concerning the negotiations between the C.C. and the opposition which, according to Martov, G. M. Krzhizhanovsky had made to him in a private talk before he left for Russia.

PAGE 390.** The proposal that in case Martov enquired about the publication of the negotiations that had taken place between the C.C. and the opposition, Krzhizhanovsky should "pass his vote" to Lengnik meant that Krzhizhanovsky and the section of the C.C. in Russia should authorise the representative of the C.C. abroad to give an official answer on this matter to the editors of *Iskra*.

PAGE 390.*** Martov's assertion that the "C.C. had tried to capture the C.O." was a misrepresentation and distortion of the facts and documents which expressed the real attitude of the C.C. in its negotiations with the opposition.

PAGE 391.* A month had passed since the *coup d'état*, carried out by the co-optation of the Martovists to two of the central bodies of the Party, viz., the editorial board of the C.O. and the Council of the Party. During this time the situation in the Party had been developing and growing worse every day. The minority stubbornly strove to obtain its main end, the seizure of the C.C., which would finally place all the leading organs of the Party in its power. All the alarm signals of the section of the C.C. outside Russia and all the energetic appeals made

by Lenin remained unanswered for weeks on end by the C.C. in Russia; on the other hand, the news that did come from time to time from Russia revealed the contented and optimistic state of mind in the home members of the C.C., or at any rate of their leading group, concerning the situation in the Party. The efforts of the minority to disorganise the ranks of the Party were increasingly successful; the split spread and became deeper and deeper. All this caused Lenin to increase his efforts to convince the home members of the C.C. of the necessity of calling a special congress.

PAGE 391.** At the end of December, Martov read a paper on the dissensions at the Second Congress of the Party to a meeting of the local group of Russian Social-Democrats in Paris. The official opponent who spoke against him, in the name of the majority, was S. I. Gusev (Lebedev).

PAGE 392.* The resolution of the C.O. of December 22 (9) which is referred to here was a decision of the editorial board of the C.O. against the actions of the members of the C.C. outside Russia, Lenin and Lengnik: 1) against Lenin for having written (in "Why I Resigned From the Editorial Board of *Iskra*") "about facts in the intimate organisational life of the Party," i.e., about the negotiations between the C.C. and the opposition and his "having tried to obtain the publication of documents" referring to these negotiations; 2) against Lengnik for having given orders for printing Lenin's article as a separate leaflet in the Party press, notwithstanding the refusal of the editors to publish it in the next issue of *Iskra*.

PAGE 392.** A special editorial note concerning the publication of Lenin's letter "Why I Resigned From the Editorial Board of *Iskra*" appeared in *Iskra*, No. 55. It is this note that is referred to here. It was written by Martov. It repeated, in a somewhat milder form, the protest of the editors against the publication of Lenin's open letter, contradicted its statements and affirmed that an agreement had been reached between the C.C. and the opposition not to publish a report of the negotiations.

PAGE 393.* This is a reply to the following passage in Noskov's letter of December 23 (10): "Send us a few texts for leaflets, because we get nothing new and the presses are reduced to repeating old matter. The order was placed by Lan [Krzhizhanovsky] with the Old Man [Lenin]."

PAGE 393.** The parallel drawn by Axelrod between Lenin and Schweizer and between the line followed by Lenin and the "dictatorship of Schweizer" merely repeated the parallel drawn by Plekhanov in his answer to Lenin's letter which appeared in *Iskra*, No. 53, in reply to Plekhanov's article "What Should Not Be Done?" Schweizer was Las-

salle's successor in the leadership of the General Association of German Workers. After the latter's death he became its head, and was given dictatorial powers by the members of the Union. He was the type of ambitious petty-bourgeois politician and demagogue who, instead of basing his policy on the class consciousness and the class struggle of the proletariat, based it on personal wire-pulling and on bargains with the Bismarck government aimed against the bourgeois liberals.

PAGE 394.* In accordance with point 2 of the Party rules, the Council of the Party was obliged to call a congress if this was demanded by Party organisations whose total votes were equal to half the votes of the congress. When raising the question of calling a special congress, Lenin calculated that two-thirds, 33 out of 49, of the votes of the aggregate Party organisation would be in favour of a congress.

PAGE 395.* *Iskra*, No. 56, which came out on January 14 (1), 1904, contained an article by Martov, "The Next Thing (Circle or Party?)," in which he tried to prove that since the Second Congress the term *Iskra*-ist had become obsolete; it had ceased to express the revolutionary tendency in Russian Social-Democracy, and had become the expression of the reactionary aspirations inspired by the circle spirit. The article called forth a strong protest from Lenin against the annexationist policy of the Mensheviks and their flagrant distortion of decisions of the Party that were perfectly clear and simple, in particular Martov's distortions of these decisions in his article.

At first Lenin intended to express his protest in the form of an open letter "To Members of the Party." He wrote the present letter and prepared it for the press; but it was not published. One of the reasons which caused Lenin to refrain from doing as he had intended was that at this point Plekhanov called a meeting of the Council of the Party for February 10 (January 28). The opportunity of using the tribune of the Council of the Party for a battle of principle with the editors of the C.O. and the prospect, which Lenin still regarded as by no means hopeless, of snatching Plekhanov away from his allies, the Martovists, in the course of an open battle with the latter, caused Lenin to refrain from sending his letter "To Members of the Party" to the press.

PAGE 396.* The reference is to the resolution on Lenin's report and Martov's co-report on the subject of the Second Party Congress. The resolution was moved at the fourth session of the Congress of the League by Trotsky and others, and was passed by the Congress when practically all the members of the League who adhered to the majority were absent. The concluding section of the resolution contained the following: ". . . The League deeply regrets that when establishing official Party centres the Congress should have neglected all continuity with the Party centres

that actually existed, thus weakening the useful effect of the measures it had passed in the course of the first half of its work and greatly impeding the work of all Party workers in bringing together the class conscious elements of the fighting proletariat."

PAGE 396.** The reference is primarily to all the local Party organisations that had discussed and endorsed the draft of the standing orders of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. that had been drawn up by the O.C. for the opening of the Congress. Point 18 of the standing orders ran: "All the decisions of the Congress and all the elections organised by it are decisions of the Party, obligatory for all Party organisations. They cannot be invalidated by anyone or under any circumstances and cannot be repealed or modified otherwise than by a subsequent Party congress." In endorsing this point of the standing orders, the organisations of the Party confirmed their unqualified submission to all the decisions of the Congress. Lenin's reference is also to the repeated confirmation, by the delegates at the Congress, of the obligatory character of the decisions of the Congress for themselves and for all Party members.

PAGE 399.* The Council of the Party met for three days, February 10-12 (January 28-30), 1904. As the first item on the agenda Lenin put the question of condemning the impermissible methods of Party strife which had been used by the minority (boycott of the central bodies of the Party elected by the Congress; cutting off the C.C. from financial sources; undermining the authority of the C.C.; the establishment inside the Party of a separate organisation of its own by the minority (of a special fund, a special transport service and a special set of agents for dealings with the committees). The spokesmen of the minority in the Council, Martov and Axelrod, actively supported by Plekhanov, defeated Lenin's motion on the subject and adopted Plekhanov's proposal on the necessity of co-opting members of the minority to the C.C. By the same majority (the opposition in alliance with Plekhanov) the Council turned down Lenin's proposal to call a special congress. The January session of the Council of the Party thus contributed towards making the situation exceedingly clear: henceforward, besides the editorial board of the C.O., the Council was to be the instrument of the factional work of the minority and this instrument was to be used in the first place to crush the C.C., to change its personnel in the interests of the minority, and thus to complete the revolution in the Party leadership that had begun with the seizure of the editorial board by the opposition. Events fully and obviously confirmed the correctness of the resolute line taken by Lenin in favour of calling a special Party congress, the necessity of which Lenin had been insisting on and explaining for more than six weeks with the greatest patience and persistence to the C.C. as a whole and to its individual members. Now the decisive

moment had come when the C.C. had to show its political leadership of the Party to the full.

On the day after the close of the session of the Council, Lenin, in the letter which is here printed, placed an ultimatum before the C.C.: either the immediate convocation of a congress, or the resignation of the whole C.C.

PAGE 400.* The reference is to an article entitled "A Sad Misunderstanding," by Plekhanov, which appeared in *Iskra*, No. 57.

PAGE 401.* Do "you give us your votes"? The question means: does the section of the C.C. in Russia authorise the two members of the C.C. abroad to present to the Council, in the name of the C.C. as a whole, the demand to call a congress and, in case the Council refuses, to announce the resignation of the whole C.C.? The C.C. left Lenin's question unanswered. Six weeks later, after Lenin and Lengnik had repeated their question, the C.C., by a majority of five to one of the members of the C.C. present in Russia, rejected Lenin's proposal to call a congress.

PAGE 402.* Lenin's letter to the Central Committee of February 13 (January 31), which contained his ultimatum to the C.C., remained unanswered. In the meantime letters came from Russia from individual members of the C.C. In the middle of February a letter arrived from L. E. Halperin who, like V. A. Noskov, was very conciliatory towards the minority. The letter reflected this state of mind and his negative attitude to the idea of calling a congress. Lenin, who knew that this was not merely the personal mood or the personal view of one member of the C.C. but the opinion of a whole group of influential members, at once replied to Halperin's letter by the letter to the members of the C.C. which is here printed.

PAGE 403.* Several members of the C.C. were at that time engaged in technical organising work, including V. A. Noskov (who was constantly travelling in connection with arranging and directing all sorts of "technique"), L. B. Krassin (who was in charge of this business in the Caucasus) and F. V. Gusarov (who was posted in the neighbourhood of the western frontier).

PAGE 403.** This refers to the answers sent by the local committees to the circular letter of the editors in December 1903, viz., the letter of the Tver Committee, the resolution of the Astrakhan Committee and the long joint letter from the representatives of the Ufa, Central Ural and Perm Committees.

PAGE 405.* The pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* was written in February-May 1904 and appeared in Geneva in May. It is devoted

to the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. and to the split at and after the Congress. The importance of this pamphlet is consequently measured by the importance of the split and by the importance of the line towards a rupture with the opportunists in the R.S.D.L.P. (and in the Second International) which was taken by Lenin and by the Party, as Comrade Stalin has said, "approximately in 1903-04." In his "Letter to the German Communists" written in 1921 (after the Third Congress of the Comintern), Lenin advances, as one of the principal causes of the defeat of the German proletariat in the revolutionary crisis of 1918-20, the fact that "at the time of the crisis the German workers found themselves without a really revolutionary party, because they had not brought about a split in time, because of the pressure of the accursed tradition of 'unity' with the venal (Scheidemann, Legien, David and Co.) and spineless (Kautsky, Hilferding and Co.) gang of lackeys of capitalism." (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. XXVI, pp. 485-86.) On the other hand, one of the principal conditions of the victory of the proletariat in Russia in 1917 was, Lenin believed, the fact that "Bolshevism, as a trend of political thought and as a political party, exists since 1903," and that having arisen at that date on "this granite theoretical foundation" of Marxian theory, it "passed through fifteen years (1903-17) of practical history which, in wealth of experience, has had no equal anywhere else in the world."

The "fifteen years of practical history" that Bolshevism had gone through resulted in the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia. And the experience of this dictatorship "has clearly shown," says Lenin, "... that absolute centralisation and the strictest discipline of the proletariat are one of the basic conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie." "Only the history of Bolshevism during the *whole* period of its existence," Lenin goes on to say, "can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and maintain, under most difficult conditions, the iron discipline necessary for the victory of the proletariat." (*"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*). The history of the split in the R.S.D.L.P. at and after the Second Congress is one of the first stages in this history of Bolshevism during the whole period of its existence. It was at this stage of its history that Bolshevism arose on the granite foundation of Marxian theory as "a new type" of party, based on "absolute centralisation and the most rigorous discipline," to become later on a world force which led the proletariat of Russia to victory and is leading the international proletariat to victory. *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* gives us a masterly analysis of this stage in the development of Bolshevism, of the fight for "a new type" of party against opportunism; it thus gives the grounds for Lenin's line towards a breach with opportunism, and shows us the tactics he pursued in this struggle.

The pamphlet was received with hostility not only by those opportunists against whom it was directly aimed, the Mensheviks, but also by

the opportunists in Europe represented by the leading centrist groups of the German Social-Democratic Party and of the Second International (Kautsky, etc.). The Left wing of the German Party also took part in this campaign against the nascent Bolshevik Party and its leader, Lenin. As Comrade Stalin writes: "The Left-wing Social-Democrats in Germany, Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg, then the leaders of the Left wing, also intervened [in the controversy—*Ed.*]. And what happened? Both came out against the Bolsheviks. At the same time the Bolsheviks were accused of betraying ultra-centrist and Blanquist tendencies. Later, these vulgar and philistine epithets were caught up by the Mensheviks and spread throughout the world." (Stalin, *Leninism*, 1933, Vol. II, p. 397.)

The main attacks of the Mensheviks, of the centrists and of the Left wing of the Second International were directed against the organisational principles of Bolshevism, *i.e.*, against the building up of "a new type" of party that would be based on that "absolute centralisation and most rigorous discipline" which according to Lenin "is one of the fundamental conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie," and, as it was at that time, over tsarist autocracy. Of all the opportunists who attacked Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Trotsky (at that time one of the leaders of Menshevism and a member of the leading body of their faction) particularly distinguished himself by his lack of political principle and by the slanderous nature of his attacks on Lenin in a pamphlet he published at the time, entitled *Our Political Tasks*. In substance, Trotsky merely played a variation of the tune of his master, P. B. Axelrod, who had attacked Lenin and the Bolsheviks in a number of articles which appeared in the new, Menshevik *Iskra* and which were permeated with opportunism in matters of organisation and theory. It is in the writings of Axelrod and Trotsky that we find organisational opportunism most blatantly combined with opportunism in questions of policy, strategy and tactics, and it is in their writings that we see Menshevism growing, as was pointed out by Lenin, into a Russian reformist party. The same organisational opportunism is displayed in Kautsky's writings against Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Kautsky, who supported the organisational views of the Mensheviks, rejected Lenin's "absolute centralisation" and, like the Mensheviks, held Lenin entirely responsible for the split in the R.S.D.L.P. Rosa Luxemburg's position was the same position of organisational opportunism. A long article by her, entitled "Organisational Questions in the Russian Social-Democratic Party," appeared simultaneously in *Die Neue Zeit* (*The New Times*), the theoretical organ of the German Party, and in the Menshevik *Iskra*, No. 69. In this article she accused Lenin and the Bolsheviks of conspirative centralism, of "mechanically transplanting" the organisational principles of "Blanquism" to the Russian Social-Democratic Party, etc., etc. Like the Economists, who had advocated the "tactics-process" as against Lenin's "tactics-plan," she advanced the conception of the "organi-

sation-process," denying the need of any organisational plan for the building up of a proletarian party.

In reply to Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin wrote an article, which bore the same title as the pamphlet: "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. XXX, pp. 88-97), with the intention of having it published in the German Social-Democratic press and thus of bringing before the workers of Western Europe the real truth about the split in the R.S.D.L.P. and the real nature of the fight of the majority against the minority as a fight against opportunism. But the leading circles of the German Party, represented by Kautsky, did not permit the publication of Lenin's article. Not only that, besides refusing to admit Lenin and the Bolsheviks to the columns of their paper and encouraging the defence of the Menshevik positions, these leading circles made an attempt formally to take the Mensheviks under their protection by proposing arbitration. This would have caused Bolshevism to become absorbed by Menshevism under the guise of restoring the unity of the R.S.D.L.P. This was the object of the letter addressed in February 1905 by Bebel to Lenin in which he, in the name of the German Party, proposed arbitration. Lenin and the Bureau of the Committees of the Majority which had been formed by that time with the object of calling the Third Congress, in a letter to Bebel dated February 7, 1905, declined the proposal, giving as their reason the impossibility of taking the responsibility for any important new steps that might commit the Party as a whole without a decision of a Party congress. At the same time Lenin sent the leadership of the German Party a copy of the reply he had sent to the Swiss Social-Democratic leader, Greulich, which he had been charged to write by the editorial board of the Bolshevik paper *Vperyod* and which gave an account "of how and why the split in the R.S.D.L.P. has by this time become a fact." This reply to Greulich who had informed the editors of *Vperyod* that he had suggested to the leadership of the German Party that it decide the question of the split in the R.S.D.L.P. "by international action" was another attempt on the part of Lenin to inform the workers of Western Europe of the true causes of the split and the true nature of the fight between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. Besides being sent to the leadership of the German Party, the reply to Greulich was printed in Russian in Geneva. In the preface Lenin made an appeal on behalf of *Vperyod* "to all the friends of *Vperyod* outside Russia" to translate the letter into the language of the country they live in and to bring it to the notice of "the largest possible number of foreign Social-Democrats." Thus, Lenin tried to make the fight against opportunism, and the line for a rupture with it, which the newly born, revolutionary, Bolshevik Party of Russia was pursuing, an international question, and it did indeed acquire tremendous international historical importance.

Of the pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* which reveals the roots of this fight and of the break with the opportunists in the

R.S.D.L.P., the essential parts relevant to the main stages of the split at and immediately after the Second Congress are here reproduced.

PAGE 407.* On the new, Menshevik *Iskra* and its position, see "A Note on the Position of the New *Iskra*" and note to page 378 * in this volume. *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* is also largely devoted to an analysis of that position.

PAGE 411.* The Byelostok Conference was called in March 1902 on the initiative of the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, which was controlled by the Economists and their supporters, the Bund. Originally the Economists had intended to call a congress of the organisations in Russia, hoping thus to strengthen their position in the R.S.D.L.P. and to paralyse the growing influence of *Iskra*. But so few delegates came that, on the insistence of the representative of *Iskra* (F. I. Dan), it was decided not to call the gathering a congress but a conference. The organisations represented at the Conference were: the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, the Foreign Committee of the Bund, the C.C. of the Bund in Russia, the St. Petersburg and the Ekaterinoslav Committees, *Yuzhny Rabochny* and the editorial board of *Iskra*. The Conference endorsed the May Day Manifesto and elected an organisation committee (which was subsequently dissolved and was reformed at the Pskov Conference in January 1903). Dan, the delegate of *Iskra*, acted at the Conference in accordance with instructions he had received from the editorial board, primarily from Lenin.

PAGE 412.* The chairman of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. was Plekhanov. In his concluding speech after the discussion of the report of the Organisation Committee for convening the Congress, he said: "So all the preliminary work of the Congress has been performed. The Congress is fully constituted, its decisions are absolutely binding on the whole Party and cancel whatever decisions of the First Congress they may be in contradiction with." This statement was greeted with applause by the whole Congress, but this did not prevent the Mensheviks, with Martov at their head, from starting a campaign against the decisions of the Congress as soon as it became apparent that, as regards the constitution of the central bodies of the Party, the majority of the Congress had rallied to the organisational proposals of Lenin. Neither did it prevent the chairman himself from going over to the side of the Menshevik disrupters and opportunists.

PAGE 425* The Voronezh Committee, which was under Economist influence, had taken up a strongly anti-*Iskra*-ist attitude long before the Second Congress. When the O.C. was formed with the object of calling the Congress, the Voronezh Committee was the only one of the local

organisations to start violent attacks on *Iskra* and on the O.C. *Iskra* sternly rebuffed the Voronezh Economists (in No. 36). The Voronezh Committee was not invited to send delegates to the Congress because it was a vacillating organisation, openly hostile to the objects pursued by the calling of the Party Congress. Lenin again spoke of the Voronezh Committee in connection with the situation after the Congress.

PAGE 426.* "What Should Not Be Done?" by Plekhanov appeared in *Iskra*, No. 52, of November 20 (7), 1903. In this article Plekhanov still makes an effort to remain "neutral" towards the two adversaries, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, but he virtually defends the Mensheviks and makes a concealed attack upon Lenin. In one of the chapters of the present pamphlet ("Small Unpleasantnesses Should Not Stand in the Way of Great Enjoyments," omitted in the present edition) Lenin says that the "central idea of 'What Should Not Be Done?' is that in politics one should not be straightforward, nor unduly outspoken, nor unduly intransigent, that sometimes, in order to prevent a split, one must even give in to the revisionists." In his letter giving his reasons for resigning from the editorial board of *Iskra* (in this volume), Lenin refutes the concealed charges made against him of undue acerbity, etc., and emphasises the necessity of casting off the traditions of sectarianism, of the circle spirit and of family habits; he demands the public discussion of the principles of the disagreement in the Party, because it is a crime to gloss over dissensions of principle, thus concealing them from the Party. Lenin connects the question with that of the role and mutual relations of leaders and masses, emphasising the enormous role of Party leaders and showing the complicated conditions for training them.

PAGE 434.* The reference is to Martov's article in *Iskra*, No. 62, "Is This the Right Way to Prepare?" in which Martov attacks the Bolshevik slogans concerning the necessity of building and consolidating an underground Party organisation and the necessity of carefully preparing for insurrection. From the Mensheviks' point of view, preparing for insurrection with the aid of a secret proletarian party was Blanquism and the adoption of conspirative methods. Martov wrote: "The more the understanding of the current *political* tasks of our Party becomes narrowed in the minds of some comrades, and the more they are inclined in practice to put up passively with the 'poverty and imperfection' of our day-to-day work and of its astounding backwardness—by no means less astounding than in the days of Economism—as compared with the demands put forth by the spontaneously insurgent masses, the more exclusively are their thoughts directed towards that luminous point which they visualise as an insurrection manufactured by them in the underground of a 'strictly secret organisation' and 'set in motion by order

of an all-powerful centre.'” This Menshevik gibe at the idea of a leading centre and of a secret organisation obviously grows into an opportunist estimation of the nature of the approaching revolution and into rejection of the idea of proletarian insurrection.

PAGE 436.* Lenin quotes the reply of the editors of the Menshevik *Iskra* to the letter from Alexandrov (Olminsky), “Organisational Problems,” which appeared as a supplement to *Iskra*, No. 56, for January 1904. Olminsky’s letter was directed against the Mensheviks and in defence of the organisational principles of the Bolsheviks. He regarded the Mensheviks’ rejection of obedience to Party discipline as aristocratic anarchism and the encouragement of circle habits. The editors’ reply was written by Plekhanov and took the form of commentaries on the letter. Plekhanov fully endorsed Axelrod’s attitude towards Bolshevism and ended his commentary by saying that Olminsky’s letter “is the best confirmation of Axelrod’s contention of the bureaucratic centralism of the majority.”

PAGE 439.* The reference is to Martov’s article, “The Awakening of Democracy and Our Tasks,” in *Iskra*, No. 58, February 7 (January 25), 1904. The central idea of the article was that the proletariat was not yet sufficiently conscious of itself as a class, that it lacked a proletarian party of its own and could not yet assume the hegemony in the revolution. Martov emphasised that a “Social-Democratic policy of the working class is not the same thing as the policy of the proletariat led by persons with Social-Democratic convictions.” In other words, he followed Axelrod in describing the R.S.D.L.P. as a group of intellectuals who are political friends and who merely try to carry out a Social-Democratic policy. “By itself the R.S.D.L.P.,” wrote Martov, “is not yet proletarian either in the nature of its activity or in its composition.”

PAGE 443.* The reference is to “A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks” by Lenin, written in September 1902 in answer to a letter from Shneyerson who had proposed a plan for the organisation of Social-Democratic work in St. Petersburg. Lenin’s letter appeared in pamphlet form and was widely circulated throughout Russia. It contained a condensed exposition of the organisational ideas of *What Is To Be Done?*. Subsequently, at the end of 1903 (November-December), Lenin wrote a preface to the pamphlet in which he polemises against the Mensheviks.

PAGE 447.* This refers to Martov’s article in *Iskra*, No. 60, “The Next Thing,” in which Martov defended the Moscow Mensheviks who proclaimed invalid the decision of the Moscow Committee of the Party recognising the authority of the C.C. of the Party (point 9 of the rules) in all questions pertaining to the appointment, expulsion or transfer of

members of the Moscow Committee. Martov and the Moscow Mensheviks insisted on the complete independence of the local committee in these matters, thus undermining completely the principle of the unity of Party leadership and dragging the Party back to a former stage when it was no more than a scattered organisation of isolated circles.

PAGE 449.* The Dresden Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party met in September 1903. It had been preceded by a prolonged discussion between the revisionists and those who were then called the orthodox Marxists. The revisionists, with Bernstein at their head, were defeated and their views were condemned by the Congress. (See note to page 31.*)

PAGE 453.* The reference is to Vera Zasulich's attack on Lenin at the Second Congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad, when she explained the change in the editorial board carried out by the Second Congress of the Party as being due to the intolerance of Lenin who, she said, in controversy was inclined to get rid of his opponent by unfair means.

PAGE 455.* The reference is to the article "Centralism in the German Social-Democratic Party," in *Iskra*, No. 64, May 1 (April 18), 1904.

PAGE 456.* The reference is to "A Brief Constitution of the R.S.D.L.P.," which was appended to Martov's article, "The Next Thing," *Iskra*, No. 58, February 7 (January 25), 1904. This "Constitution" is a satire on Lenin's "regime" in the Party and describes the leading members of the Party centres as the "bullies," who possess all rights, and the rank and file of the Party as the "bullied," who are devoid of all rights.

This caricature of Lenin's Bolshevik principles in the matter of organisation was intended to discredit the Bolsheviks and especially Lenin himself in the eyes of the Party masses. But the attempt met with a decided rebuff on the part of the Party organisations in Russia, and even called forth the protest of the printers of the press where the Menshevik *Iskra* was printed.

PAGE 467.* From the moment he started his campaign for the calling of a special congress, Lenin was confronted with the conciliatory attitude of a number of members of the C.C. Regarding this attitude as a *bona fide* error, Lenin devoted much time and effort to trying to overcome it. In his letters to members of the C.C. he repeatedly tried to make them see the harmfulness of their position. He tried to convince them of the necessity of calling a congress, as the only radical method at the disposal of the Party against the disorganising and disruptive influence that had been brought into the Party by the minority. In spite of all these efforts, the conciliatory section of the members of the C.C.—the

most active and forward of whom was V. A. Noskov—passed by degrees from passive resistance to Lenin's agitation to an undisguised fight against Lenin's line, and to the support of an unprincipled conciliation with the minority at any price. In February the section of the C.C. in Russia, by a majority of five to one of the members then present in Russia, pronounced itself against convening a congress. Then, somewhat later, the Central Committee, consisting of five members, passed a vote of censure on Lenin for agitating in favour of convening a congress. Finally, at what is known as the "July" meeting three members who supported the conciliatory line (Noskov, Krassin and Halperin) carried out a regular *coup d'état* inside the C.C.; taking advantage of the arrests of some and of the resignation of other members of the Central Committee and seizing on the fact that one of the members was temporarily working as a member of the St. Petersburg Committee, they unseated five of the members of the C.C. (Lengnik, Zemlyachka, Krzhizhanovsky, Gusarov and Essen) and co-opted three new members, all of them "conciliators," to replace them. Lenin was deprived of the power to represent the C.C. abroad, and special powers were given to Noskov. A decision was adopted to bring about a conciliation with the minority at all cost.

At the end of August, V. A. Noskov arrived from Russia with the object of carrying out the decisions of the C.C. Lenin protested against all decisions taken by a C.C. consisting of only three members. He was away from Geneva at the time and for two or three weeks he carried on a correspondence with Noskov on the subject of these decisions and of the conflict inside the C.C. The letter which is reproduced here is the final stage of this correspondence. It contains Lenin's estimation of the conciliationism of Noskov and his adherents in the C.C. as the most unprincipled opportunism. The letter announced Lenin's rupture with Noskov personally and with the C.C. After this Lenin, as the leader of the Committees of the Majority, carried on an open campaign for a third congress in opposition to *all* the central bodies of the Party, which had passed over to the minority and openly trampled upon the clear and explicit decisions of the Second Congress.

PAGE 467.** The agreement of the three members of the C.C. abroad concluded June 8 (May 26), 1904, was an agreement between Lenin and Noskov who had arrived from Russia to represent the C.C. abroad and to act as second delegate of the C.C. in the Council of the Party in place of F. V. Lengnik who returned to Russia. The agreement registered the decided difference between Noskov and Lenin on the question of calling a congress, and recorded their undertaking to "abstain from acting in any matter officially in the name of the C.C. except with their mutual consent and over their joint signature" until the final settlement of the differences in the C.C.

PAGE 470.* The minutes of the meeting of the Council of the Party of

February 10-12 (January 28-30), 1904, were first published in 1929, twenty-five years later, by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in the *Lenin Miscellany*, Vol. X, pp. 181-82.

PAGE 472.* The Southern Bureau of the C.C. was formed in the beginning of 1904. It consisted of agents of the C.C., including V. V. Vorovsky, I. H. Lalayants, and P. I. Kulyabko, all of them staunch supporters of the majority. The Southern Bureau had its headquarters in Odessa and united the three southern committees of Odessa, Nikolayev and Ekaterinoslav. These committees and the Southern Bureau were definitely on the side of Lenin and the majority and carried on active agitation for a congress. The C.C. at its "July meeting" (see note to page 467*), three members only being present, decided "to dissolve the Southern Bureau of the C.C. in view of the fact that its work is not in agreement with that of the C.C."

PAGE 472.** The decision to hold a conference of representatives of the C.C. with representatives of the minority was also adopted by the C.C. at the "July meeting." The conference took place in Russia in October 1904, two representatives of the C.C. (L. E. Halperin and I. F. Dubrovinsky) and two of the minority (V. N. Krokhamall and V. N. Rozanov) being present. Among other measures of conciliation the C.C. proposed that three members of the minority be co-opted to the C.C. The representatives of the minority accepted the proposal. These two representatives and R. S. Halberstadt were the persons co-opted.

PAGE 473.* The St. Petersburg and Ekaterinoslav resolutions referred to here as having been refused publication in *Iskra*, along with other resolutions of the Committees of the Majority, are the resolution of the St. Petersburg Committee of July 23 (10) and the letter of the Ekaterinoslav Committee to all organisations of the R.S.D.L.P. of June 14 (1), 1904. Both committees pronounced themselves against the co-optation of representatives of the minority to the C.C. and in favour of calling a congress.

PAGE 475.* Owing to the growing revolutionary ferment in the country (the unrest among the peasantry in 1902 and the mass workers' strikes in 1903), and also the growing temper of opposition among the bourgeoisie and the liberal aristocracy, the government found itself compelled to make certain slight concessions to the moderate elements in society. After the assassination of the Minister of the Interior, Plehve, Prince P. D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, who proclaimed that he was "well disposed" and "trustful towards society," was appointed to take his place (September 1904). The censorship of the press was made a little less strict and a number of Zemstvo liberals were recalled from exile. Of course these concessions were insignificant; for example, permission to hold a Zemstvo congress was given, but that permission was withdrawn five

days before the congress was to have convened. The more moderate of the Zemstvo liberals believed that the new "liberal" policy of the government created the conditions in which co-operation with the government would be possible, but the more radical section, members of the *Osvobozhdeniye* group, led by Struve, continued to demand a constitution, freedom of coalition for liberals, especially those engaged in the liberal professions. The Zemstvo liberals gave expression to these demands at the ordinary meetings of the gubernia Zemstvo assemblies. Needless to say, in spite of their "radicalism" the Zemstvo liberals were opposed to revolutionary methods of struggle and recognised only "peaceful means of lawful struggle for rights."

This "liberal" era did not last long. In December 1904, the tsar issued an order prohibiting the Zemstvo assemblies from discussing political questions, as the order declared, "for the discussion of which they are not legally authorised." The peremptory order of the tsar, the wave of patriotism that swept over the bourgeoisie in connection with the Russo-Japanese War and, above all perhaps, their fear of the labour movement (after the events of Bloody Sunday, January 9, 1905), soon put an end to the Zemstvo "opposition." The "Zemstvo campaign" revealed the complete political impotence of the liberals.

It was in these circumstances that the Menshevik editorial board of *Iskra*, in November 1904, published its "Letter to Party Organisations," which dealt with the Zemstvo campaign. In this letter the Mensheviks greatly exaggerated the determination of the liberals and their ability to fight for a constitution. The letter declared that the Zemstvo radicals "are busily engaged in preparing for a demonstration in favour of a constitution at the meetings of the gubernia Zemstvo assemblies." Instead of exposing the political impotence and cowardice of the Zemstvo liberals, the Mensheviks wrote: "By coming out officially against absolutism and by putting to it demands which, if satisfied, would help to abolish it, they in fact have become our allies (of course, in a very relative sense), although not sufficiently determined in their actions and not sufficiently democratic in their aims."

Further on it wrote: "Our attitude towards the liberal bourgeoisie is determined by the task of imbuing it with greater courage and of inducing it to associate itself with the demands which the proletariat, guided by Social-Democracy, puts forward. We would, however, commit a fatal error if we set ourselves the aim, by means of energetic measures of *intimidation*, of compelling the Zemstvo, or any other organs of bourgeois opposition immediately, under the influence of *panic*, to make a formal promise to present our demands to the government. Such tactics would only discredit Social-Democracy, for they would convert the whole of our political campaign into a lever of reaction." Thus, the Mensheviks practically abandoned all right to criticise and expose liberalism and said the same things that were said by the liberals, even

by the Right represented by *Novoye Vremya* (*New Times*). The Mensheviks not only overestimated the liberals as allies, but even capitulated to them. The thing they feared most was that the proletariat would *frighten* the bourgeoisie by too vigorous action and that it would put forward demands that would not be acceptable to the liberals. The Mensheviks acted in accordance with their view that the proletariat and its party are not the vanguard in the struggle against the autocracy. Thus, the "Letter" very strikingly revealed the profound difference in the principles of Menshevism and Bolshevism. The article given here deals in detail with the principles of the Mensheviks and of *Iskra* and of their "plan for a Zemstvo campaign." This article helped very considerably to formulate Bolshevik tactics and to explain them to the mass of the members of the Party.

PAGE 481.* The National-Liberal Party was the party of the German industrial bourgeoisie (formed in 1866) the object of which was the unification of Germany under the leadership of Prussia. Germany at that time was split up into a multitude of separate petty states and principalities, which was a great hindrance to the economic development of the country. To the extent that the National-Liberals wished to unite the country they expressed the interests of the economic and political development of the country in general. But they wished to obtain unity by subjecting the small states to Prussia, which was dominated by the *Junkers* (landlords), and with this object in view they gave their support to the reactionary policy of the Prussian government (Bismarck) which was bringing about this union with the aid of blood and iron. And to that extent the National-Liberals were the active assistants of Prussian reaction.

PAGE 485.* The strike at the central railway workshops at Rostov-on-Don started on November 17 (4), 1902. In an article, "New Events and Old Problems" (*Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. V, pp. 206-10), Lenin speaks in the following terms of this strike, which indicated that the movement was passing to new forms and new methods of struggle: "Affecting many thousands of workers, the strike, which began with demands of a purely economic character, soon becomes a political event. . . . Crowds numbering, according to the evidence of eye witnesses, up to twenty and thirty thousand people, hold political meetings which are remarkably serious and organised, where Social-Democratic manifestoes are eagerly read and commented on, political speeches are made, the elementary truths of socialism and of the political struggle are explained. . . . The administration and the police lose their heads . . . and for several days they are powerless to prevent open-air mass political meetings of a nature unprecedented in Russia. And when ultimately the armed forces are called out, the crowd puts up a desperate resistance and the death of a comrade becomes, on the next day, the occasion

for a political demonstration over his body. The Don Committee was a thousand times right when, in a manifesto, it spoke of the Rostov strike as one of the preliminaries to the general rising of the Russian workers under the slogan of political liberty. Events like these glaringly show that a general armed insurrection against the tsarist government is maturing not only as an idea in the minds and programmes of revolutionaries, but as the inevitable, practical and natural, *next* step of the movement itself, as the result of the growing fearlessness of the masses, who are receiving such valuable lessons, such a splendid education from Russian reality."

PAGE 486.* Balalaykin—a character in Saltykov-Shchedrin's *Amidst Moderation* and *A Contemporary Idyll*, representing a type of artful twaddling lawyer. By "editorial Balalaykin" Lenin means L. D. Trotsky, who, in 1904, wrote a pamphlet entitled *Our Political Tasks*, in which, in addition to conducting a slanderous controversy against Lenin and the Bolsheviks, he enunciates the views of the Mensheviks after the split at the Second Congress of the Party.

PAGE 489.* This refers to the Russo-Japanese War. This war was called forth by the predatory policy of the tsarist government in the Far East. As early as the 'nineties the Romanov government began openly to seize new territories in the Far East in the interests of the landlords and capitalists. In 1896, Russia occupied Port Arthur. In 1901, during the Boxer Rebellion, Russian troops occupied Manchuria. At the same time the tsarist government openly began to make preparations to seize Korea. On this question, as well as on that of Manchuria, Russia came into conflict with Japan, who was planning to gain possession of Korea herself. Japan was supported by England and the United States who were opposed to the spread of Russian influence in Manchuria. Meanwhile, the revolutionary movement in Russia was growing, and even the most cautious servants of the tsar, for example Witte, began to look upon a "victorious little war" with Japan as a means of side-tracking the masses from the revolution. Convinced that she was fully prepared for war, Japan, in February 1904, commenced military operations by an attack on the Russian fleet in Port Arthur.

In August 1904, the Russian forces, commanded by General Kuropatkin, suffered a heavy defeat at Liaoyang, and on January 2, 1905, Port Arthur was surrendered to the Japanese. After the severe defeat at Mukden in March, in which nearly half the army was lost, and the rout of the Russian fleet in the naval battle off Tsushima, Russia, in August 1905, was compelled to sign the Portsmouth Treaty by which she surrendered Port Arthur, Port Dalny (now Dairen) and the southern part of the island of Sakhalin to Japan.

The defeat in the Russo-Japanese War had considerable effect in accelerating the development of revolutionary events in Russia in 1905,

for it glaringly revealed the weakness of the tsarist monarchy, the incompetence of its servants and the corruption of its officials. Every new defeat suffered by the Russian forces in the war caused a fresh outburst of indignation, and even among the moderate liberals it roused the desire for the defeat of the tsarist government.

PAGE 489.** *Pravo (Law)*, a weekly journal of jurisprudence, of a moderate liberal tendency, appeared in St. Petersburg from 1899 to 1918. Issue No. 39 for 1904 contained an article by Eugene Trubetskoy, "The War and the Bureaucracy." Trubetskoy complained of the reactionary policy of the Russian bureaucracy, which he said helped to strengthen the activity of the "extremist" parties. "While persons of moderate views have to remain silent, unable to express their views in the legal press, illegal leaflets inundate the streets and their influence . . . grows every day." Trying to frighten the government with the prospect of the growing "interior danger" of the extremist revolutionary parties, Trubetskoy called on the bureaucracy to have "confidence" in the moderate elements of "society" and to unite with "society" in serving common aims. The bureaucracy "must not be the master of a speechless herd, but the instrument of a throne that has the support of society. . . . Then we need dread no enemy either abroad or at home." Thus wrote Trubetskoy, promising the "throne" the full support of "society," *i.e.*, the liberals, as soon as their modest demands were satisfied.

ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line from top</i>	<i>Should Read:</i>
197	23	the question of Marxism and the opportunist criticism of it, or the
522	24 and 25	PAGE 236.* In addition to the annuities the peasants had to pay for the land they received at the time of the "emancipation," numerous taxes

